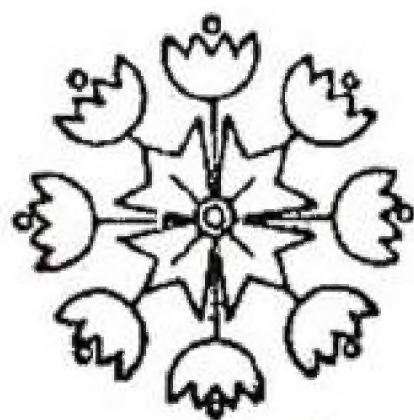




Sheikh Nazim Al-Qubrusi

MERCY OCEANS' RISING SUN

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*The Discourses of Our Master
Sheikh Nazim Al-Qubrusi
(Imam ul-Haqqaniyyin)*

*Delivered by the Permission
of his Grandsheikh
Sheikh Abdullah Ad-Daghistani
(May Allah Sanctify his Blessed Soul)*



Selected Lectures

Summer 1405 A. H. (1985 C. E.)

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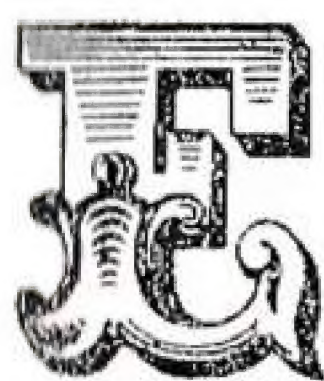


*In the Name of Allah
the All - Merciful,
the All-Beneficent, the Most - Munificent*

The Station of Unity

"Oh my Lord, I ask You to grant me understanding, and to enable me, Oh my Lord, to make others understand."

(A prayer of the Holy Prophet Muhammed,
Peace be upon him)



very time I address people I silently make this supplication, as I know that only he who himself understands can teach people anything useful. A visitor recently told me about a spiritual teacher whose lectures and writings were so difficult that only trained intellectuals could make sense of what he was saying. It is not a sign of a man's understanding that his teachings be incomprehensible; a man of understanding will always try to make himself well understood by using clear and straightforward speech, adjusting to the level of his audience, and he will try to address as broad an audience as possible, otherwise his words will be scattered with the winds.

Even Allah Almighty, the Lord of all creatures, the Master of existence, in all His Glory and Greatness condescends to the level of His creatures. This is called "Tanazzulat Subhani" or, as close as it can be translated, "the Condescension of Glory" (or "the Condescension of the Glorious One"). You may find Him Almighty with His creatures on every level.

If He were not with an ant, and knew not the conditions in which that ant lives and what are its needs, He could not, by definition be the Lord of that ant. He, the Lord of all, in His knowledge, is even with microscopic creatures; so what about mankind, the most distinguished of His creatures, is it saying too much to say that He is with us? "Does the Creator not know what He created?" asks the Lord, that we may understand His Omniscience, and that being the Lord of all creation does not detract from His being with each individual creature.

The Holy Prophets and their Inheritors in every age have been endowed with knowledge of Divine Realities which is hidden from the rest of humanity, and it is their main duty to make these realities comprehensible to mankind in general, and to individual people in whatever way possible, in accordance with the respective levels and capabilities of those people. As the teachers of humanity they have been granted the ability to communicate in this manner: to speak directly to people's hearts.

This they have been granted from the Attributes of their Lord. But only Prophets and their true inheritors may find such flexibility available to them; for others it is very difficult to address anyone other than those who share with them a similar background and manner of perception. But Divine Teachers may be to every people what they need, may say what they need to hear; that is why people of varying backgrounds and ranks in life may all find peace with the same man and follow him.

A Concorde could never land on the roof of this building, but a helicopter could. Most scholars are like Concorde: so proud of their immense wingspans, streamlined form and speed. Only a few statesmen and tycoons — men and women of distinction and endowed with great wealth — may enter and ride Concorde. So scholars may speak and write for the appreciation of other scholars. Concorde fly at tremendous speeds and require huge runways at international airports to land, but a helicopter can land anywhere, even sometimes at sea, and can always hover in mid-air while lowering a lifeline to people trapped by a fire. So Divine Teachers are accessible to everyone in every situation, whereas Concorde might crash in a place where only helicopters can reach to rescue the survivors. Therefore, I am not leaving them on the tops of Himalaya mountains, but bringing them to safety.

Seekers of truth must look for those qualities

in a teacher who purports to be addressing subjects related to the Divine. Otherwise they will be pursuing useless studies, and, according to the Holy Prophet, a sign of a person's perfection in Islam is his abandonment of useless activities ("that which doesn't concern him").

Our guest mentioned that this scholar was addressing the topics of "Fana and Baqa", or "Annihilation and Permanence in the Divine". I think that no one except those who have arrived at these Stations is qualified to speak of them, otherwise his description will be like that of a person who has never tasted honey trying to describe its taste from what he has read about it to others who have been deprived of honey. Or it will be like asking a little boy about the pleasures of a honeymoon... useless.

These topics are Oceans. When you melt, dissolving in the Unity Ocean of Allah Almighty, then you may understand the meaning of "Fani - fillah" (Annihilation in Allah). When you abandon your position as a being in existence, when you become as a drop of rain falling from the sky and are immersed, united in that Ocean of Divine Unity, then no one can ask where that drop has gone: the drop became an Ocean.

As long as the drop is falling, it continues to say: "I am something", but when it reaches that Ocean, it looks and says: "Where am I? I am finished. I am with Him. I am here, but not here; only

He is here, but I am now with Him. I am in His Ocean. I feel this, but no more can it be said that I am a drop: this drop has become an Ocean". That is only a very simple description of Annihilation in God.

"Baqa" or Permanence, is to be with Him always. In such a Station your personality does not appear; what appears is only Divine Existence. You have been dressed in Divine Unity. That is the "Station of Unity", "Maqam at-Tawhid". What Baqa means is that you will never lose sight, hearing, feeling, knowing, understanding - never, but they will be without limits. We must try to attain these Stations, but the Way is difficult and requires severe training.

One of the aspects of that training is to try and see everything as proceeding from Him Alone. This is the sixth pillar of faith in Islam: The belief that everything that happens in this world, the good and the bad alike, are from God. This is referred to as "Tawhid al-Af'al" or "The Unity of Actions". The way to begin to realize this point is to remember the source of all events, Allah Almighty, when events occur, and not to occupy one's self with blaming or lauding those who are not really the causes of events, only the instruments to their occurrence. This means that if Ahmed comes and gives you a pound coin and then Fulan comes and slaps you and takes it away, you don't think of Ahmed as the giver of the money, nor of Fulan

as a thief. If you think like this you have fallen from that high level of faith. You must perceive the hand of Allah behind both hands — that which giveth and that which taketh away — as He is the creator of the actions of people.

When someone is generous or kind to you, you must remember that it was your Lord who sent him with that favour, and you must thank your Lord. But at the same time you are going to say: "Thank you" to that person, as without giving thanks to the carrier of that blessing your thanks to its origin is not going to be complete. Therefore the Holy Prophet said: "Who thanks not people thanks not Allah". Our Prophet, upon whom be peace, is advising us strongly that we should not allow our vision of unity to distract us from perfecting our politeness with our fellow men. But you know that it is your Lord who sent him, and you are not forgetting that under any circumstances. And when you see that Ahmed has filled your hands with gold, you must say to him: "Oh Sheikh Ahmed, thank you so much! And firstly thanks to your Lord, who sent you with favours for me, and thank you for faithfully delivering what was entrusted to you".

And when that robber Fulan comes, hits you and takes all the money, don't be angry with him! Yes, the Divine Law, the Shariah, permits you to retrieve that money if you can, and prescribes a punishment to be meted out by the society as well,

but if you are on the way of Unity, then you must regard that action as coming to you from Allah Almighty too. He Alone sent that man to rob you, because the Creator of every action is only One: Allah Almighty.

Because it is not possible for all people to aspire to this high level of faith in which God's Hand is seen behind every event, Allah Almighty in one verse of the Holy Qur'an, condones "a life for a life" in the case of murder, and goes on to call those who are capable of it to "turning the other cheek". These are the levels, respectively, of Shariah, the Law, and Tariqah, the Path. Based on this verse, therefore, the Islamic Law concerning murder is balanced, making concession for the normal human feelings for vengeance in the face of such an abominable crime. Islam allows for the execution of the duly convicted murderer, and in this way assuages the feelings of the close relatives, thus preventing extended blood - feuds. The law also allows for the payment of blood money in lieu of execution, to be paid to the victim's close relatives. Lastly the verse calls those who are seeking the highest level of faith and unity of vision to forgiveness, saying: "And whoso forgives and promotes understanding, his reward is incumbent on his Lord".

What Allah is saying to seekers of absolute truth is: "Now forgive him, because I sent him to do that action". Then you realize that, in reality,

there is no question of guilt nor need for revenge. But that is not the common level. That is the level to be striven for, and it is beyond us to forgive in such a manner because our egos are like volcanoes.

Now people may be very polite in their everyday dealings, as long as everyone behaves in accordance with their expectations and everything falls into place according to plan; but should, God forbid, the smallest thing go wrong — for example a small error in driving, even one that causes no accident — for such a small reason one may hear the ugliest obscenities pour from their mouths like a lava eruption. That ego makes people dangerously ill, and now that people are totally under their egos' command, where can you find the tolerance described in that Holy Verse of the Qur'an?

So much hate and frustration is pent up in people — I see it in their looks — and so often a scapegoat is sought upon whom to release that torrent, and the best, the tried and true scapegoat throughout the world is always the "foreigners"; so I am quick to assure people here in the West: "We are just here as your guests. This is your homeland." But is it? You can't stay here either except in your graves. Your homeland is the grave, not above ground. Thank God, no one is begrudging us cemetery plots, no one is trying to prevent our being buried. The gravedigger wipes the dirt off his hands and goes away, and the Earth accepts us indiscriminately; but people on the Earth are

busy making distinctions, and therefore, that high level of acceptance of actions as coming from God is rarely found. But He teaches us the lesson nonetheless, saying: "You must understand who I am: I am the Creator of people and their works: understand this, that you may attain peace and finally leave behind your quarrelsomeness."

Once I was in Mecca with our Grandsheikh making Tawaf (circumambulating) the House of Allah, the Kaaba. Grandsheikh said to me: "Look up!" When I looked I saw above the heads of the people another group of worshippers performing their Tawaf; but these people were of a different class: calm, peaceful and graceful. They too were of mankind, not Angels, but they were the ones who had reached the level of seeing every action as issuing from Allah Almighty, therefore they left the level of earthly struggle.

But, meanwhile, back on the ground, amidst the throng, with those who lack such certainty, we were being pushed, shoved and trampled upon. Some groups locked arms and shoved straight through the crowd, full-speed ahead, sending all who were unfortunate enough to fall in their path flying through the air, like discarded banana peels. Elbows in my ribs, heels on my toes... but above us, the ones who concur with God's Will have no need for earth under their feet. Now, perhaps, you are thinking that such a thing is impossible, that I am telling a "tall tale", but yet,

when you are told that airplanes fly you think nothing of it. If man can make metal fly, cannot God make man fly? They are at peace with their Lord and with everything in creation, therefore, everything carries them.

And so, we have been shown a higher way, the vision of Unity, and we have been asked to be patient with those events that are not to our liking, remembering their source. This is the best training for our egos. Undergo this training or you will struggle fruitlessly — up to the grave. We are being trained by our Lord to recognize the Unity of Actions, so that we can come to understand the Unity of His Holy Names, which leads us to the knowledge of the Unity of His Holy Attributes; that knowledge will prepare us for that ultimate dive into the Unity Ocean of Allah Almighty's existence - essence. That is the final goal: that raindrop falls, and it will not emerge again ever — and it is content because it has just gained everything eternally, forever.

Therefore, Allah Almighty addresses mankind, saying: "Oh man, verily you are striving towards your Lord, and you will meet Him". He Almighty is teaching us that all our striving on Earth, our running from East to West, here and there, night and day, is, unwittingly, nothing else than our race towards our Lord's endless Unity Ocean, but we can't now understand. Our souls long for our Lord, therefore we move, and there is nowhere to move save towards the One.

No One is Refused



Today, as I was praying, an important point appeared in the mirror of my heart, a subject that needs to be addressed. What is the position of every single person toward the rest of humanity and the rest of creation in general? Each person, each being, is by nature self-centered, though constantly interacting with others in his surroundings. Everybody divides his fellow beings into distinct categories: those having more in common with himself and others more in opposition — and the less in common the more critical the question becomes. So as a follower of a certain religion, you must ask yourself, what your attitude towards members of other religions will be. As a man, what kind of attitude do you have towards women, or as a woman towards men? As an elderly person towards the young, or as a youth, towards the elderly? As a wealthy person towards the poor, or as a poor man towards the wealthy? As a literate person towards the illiterate? What is your attitude, as a human being, towards animals, plants, inanimate objects, everything in existence?

The Holy Prophet, Muhammad, upon whom

be peace, gave guidance to mankind in this matter when he said: "My Lord has taught me to show respect to all, to maintain a high level of good manners, and my Lord has perfected His teaching". Now we need to know what those best manners are, and how they help us to show respect to all creatures in accordance with their respective levels, for, while Allah Almighty has made all creatures worthy of respect, He has especially honoured mankind. We are invited to realize the full potential of that honour by perfecting our relations with all that surrounds us.

This perfection calls for a balance in our relations, along with the perception of the differences between beings and an ability to adjust our behaviour according to those distinctions. This is because Allah's creatures, most especially men, are not factory productions, mass - produced and cut out of the same mould. Each person has his own unique form, characteristics and capabilities — you can't find two exactly identical people, even identical twins may differ drastically in character. Everyone carries something distinct, and we must observe these varying and distinguishing marks, that thereby we may receive Divine Wisdom, and marvel at the Power of our Lord, for who else could create such diversity? Whether you look around you at your fellow men, or at the stars in the sky, you will know, by their infinite variations that only God can have created the universe.

Human beings, the "Crown of Creation", are candidates for the honourable rank of "Deputy of Allah on Earth". We are beings who have been endowed with the potential for uncovering a great secret within ourselves. If in heedlessness we do not strive for it, it will remain deeply hidden within ourselves. What is the great secret within man that he must discover to attain this rank? It is to understand that you are a manifestation of one of our Lord's endless Divine Attributes. Each person manifests a distinct attribute, no matter how many billions of people appear and disappear from this Earth, each one manifests a unique aspect of the Divine Reality. Each Divine Attribute is distinct, and, when fully unveiled, equally Divine. Therefore, our Lord is oblivious to our outward forms but is always mindful of the states of our hearts, as the heart of each man is a throne from among the endless thrones of Allah Almighty. That heart is not the organ in our chests, it is only represented by it as a figure of speech. In your real heart, your "heart of hearts", there is a throne and He Almighty appears on that throne through a distinct attribute that manifests in you, and nowhere else in creation.

Therefore, you must respect everyone in existence, as, in reality, that respect is the respect for your Lord within him. That is the way our Prophet treated people, the way taught by real Islam: a deviance from this "Way of best manners" is a dangerous innovation (bid'a) of high degree. The

respect that we must show towards our fellow human beings is such that, should a baby be born, take three breaths and die, we must name him, wash his body and pray over him the funeral prayer; and if there is no one else to perform those rites, even the Sultan himself is required to do so, and be that baby born to the lowest class of his subjects.

And what if the living or the dead be of another religion or without religion, do we show them less respect? One day the Holy Prophet was sitting with his companions when a funeral procession passed by. The Holy Prophet stood up in a sign of respect to that departed soul. One of the companions said: "Oh Messenger of God, that is the body of one of the heathens. Are you showing respect to such people?" It was a sign of bad manners for that companion to say this, and he immediately regretted it. Does the Prophet not know whether that dead person and those of the procession are Muslims or idol-worshippers? If not, how can he be a Prophet? But as the companions were at different levels of understanding and manners, building gradually towards perfection, the Prophet was always patient with those who showed such a challenging attitude; he explained his actions to that companion according to the level of his understanding — which was the common level. And how difficult for the common believer, whose human feelings are caught in the ebb and flow of daily

events to understand how the Prophet gave this respect for people who were actively engaged in oppressing the Muslims — killing and boycotting them, and generally showing abominable qualities! How difficult for the common people to make a distinction between people's bad actions and the Divine Realities hidden and veiled, yet present and untouched, in their heart of hearts, and in this way to understand why you must not hate your enemies! Such understanding makes a person eligible to receive Divine Secrets, and a category of knowledge the Holy Prophet was instructed to reveal only to initiates.

Therefore, to guide that companion in the general direction of this reality while not revealing to him that which he could not comprehend, the Holy Prophet told him: "Yes, these are unbelievers, but you must know that each one has Angels accompanying him, recording his good and bad deeds, and the Angel of Death, Azrail, is accompanying the dead man as well: I am standing out of respect for those Angels". In this way the Holy Prophet instructed all Muslims to show respect to all people living and dead, no matter how terrible their actions might be.

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, an Islamic Saint known throughout East and West (and the author of the epic Sufi poem, the Mathnawi) was once crossing a marketplace when a priest passed by and bowed his head in respect. Mevlana returned

this gesture, bowing even lower, from the waist. The people asked him: "How is it that you bowed in front of that priest (who represents a religion that failed to recognize the Holy Prophet of Islam)?" In Islam, bowing is a gesture generally reserved for the worship of God, other signs of respect being used more commonly.

Then Mevlana answered them, on a level that accorded with their understanding: "That priest was humbling himself in front of us. He is Christian, we are Muslim; and Islam represents the completion of every goodness found in Christianity. Therefore, if he is humble we must strive to be even more humble".

This explanation is true, but on a deeper level, this reciprocation may be understood as respect to the real personality, the Divine Personality of that priest - and it is only He Almighty who dresses His servants in differing outward forms and predisposes them for different kinds of actions. Mevlana recognized that it was his Lord who dressed him as a Sheikh and dressed that man as a priest; and if He wills, He can cause them to change roles, for each of their hearts to cling to the other's religion in the blink of an eye; and who can say what Allah will do? What is beneath all these clothes but the throne of Allah, in a unique personality manifestation?

In the Holy Qur'an it is related that, when Allah Almighty created Adam, He ordered all the

Angels to prostrate in front of him. Do you think Allah Almighty was ordering them to worship other than Himself? All of the Angels were able to perceive that Divine Manifestation in Adam, and bowed down to their Lord by prostrating in front of Adam. But also in attendance was Satan, who was veiled by envy, and said: "What is he that I should worship him: I worship God alone". But Satan could not see what was inside of Adam: all the Holy Names of Allah that were to be manifested by all of his descendants. Were those veils of envy to be lifted, he would have been the first to obey. Envy blinds us to this vision, and, unhappily, it prevented many of those who represented earlier revealed religions from recognizing the Prophet Muhammad when he came, the veritable brother of the Prophets they venerate.

If we can remember that the presence of this Divine secret is in people's hearts, and look past their outward forms and actions, we may learn from everything and everyone and increase in wisdom. Only with this vision can we aspire to a magnanimity that will cause good actions to appear from people, for a ray of their Divine Essence to shine through and encourage the veils of ego to be lifted. Respect of the Divine Nature in man leads to familiarity between people, and familiarity opens the way to love, and all love belongs to our Lord.

Our main responsibility in life is this: to clean

off the bad characteristics that cover our Divine Personalities, and once we have accomplished this to help others free themselves of that heavy burden. We must always remember the sacrosanct nature of souls. Look, Sayyidina Umar, who was to become the second Khalifa of Islam, came to the Holy Prophet with the intention of killing him, but left that meeting with a heart full of love and goodness. He was the same man, the essence of his being never changed, only his attitude did. So, we must always beware of saying: "So-and-so is a bad person". You can't say that of his real essence, no.

Although we regard the essences of people, we don't accept their bad actions, but "fire upon" them the same way that a surgeon removes a tumour from a patient and leaves healthy tissue inside of him; he knows to distinguish healthy tissue from cancerous tissue and removes only what is dangerous...

That is the method practiced by all the Prophets of all revealed religions from the beginning to the end. To help people purify themselves of destructive characteristics was the mission of Moses, of Jesus and also of the Seal of Prophets Muhammed, who was ordered by his Lord: "Purify them". They all worked to this end and never despaired of success, as they had certainty that a treasure remained buried in people's hearts. Look, if you have a precious diamond and then it falls into the toilet, are you going to flush it down with the dirties?

Would anyone suggest such a thing? Perhaps some proud or weak-stomached people might call for a servant to do it, but no one in his right mind would flush it away. Then, when you retrieve that diamond you are going to wash it with soap and water thoroughly, perhaps dip it in rose oil, and then return it to your finger. No one is then thinking that the diamond is dirty. Diamonds do not absorb the qualities of what they fall into — souls are the same.

In our time many people are searching for common ground upon which followers of all religions may stand, a school of thought which may trace its thread through all true inspiration. This is that common ground: aspire to a deeper understanding through your religion, an understanding that will open your eyes to the presence of the One in all things, that will reveal to you the respectability of all creatures, especially human beings, and enable you to desist from hating evildoers even while opposing their plots. This view will distance us from such a strong identity with labels that evoke fervor or enmity, as: American, Russian, German, Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, etc... and draw us closer to the realization that our Lord has honoured us all equally through the universal presence of His Divine Essence in our hearts. From that vantage point we will see that our Lord has given us through that Essence wonderful and unique characteristics, made

each and every one of us a manifestation of His Divine Attributes, of Himself.

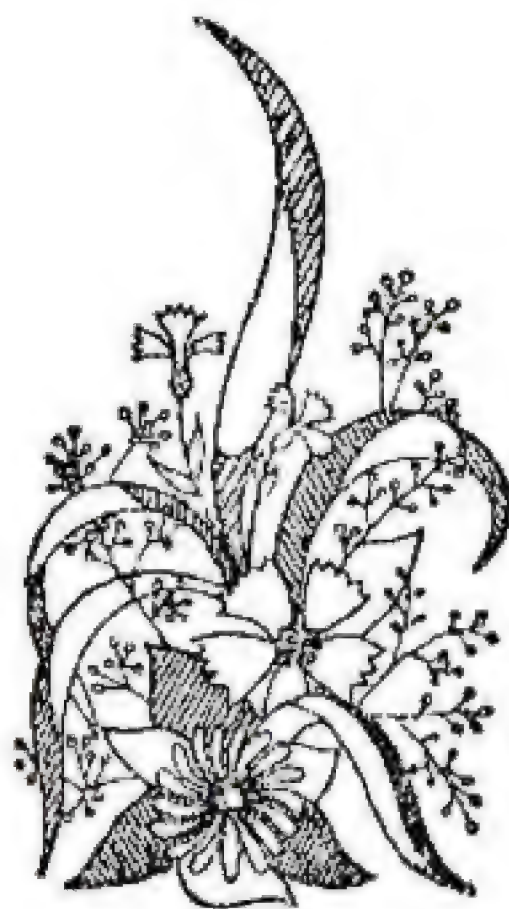
Then it will be clear to us as well, that the veils of ego that cover our essence are as varied and subtle as the differences in the manifestation of the Essence; every one has unique "ego traps" designed to catch his own unique soul — and to avoid or escape these traps is at the heart of the knowledge of the Way. Only the one who approaches his Lord with sincere piety may discover that way, and that sincerity is what our Lord desires of us, what is of real value, as He says in His Holy Book: "The best (or most honourable) of you is the most sincerely pious and God-fearing". In other words, our Lord has honoured us all, but reserves His highest honours for those who strive towards Him.

The Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was endowed with the widest understanding of the significance of the Holy Verse: "We have honoured all of the Children of Adam", the understanding of the presence of the One in the many. Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi was given the distinction of declaring these realities most openly to all Nations, inviting all people unconditionally through an open door, saying:

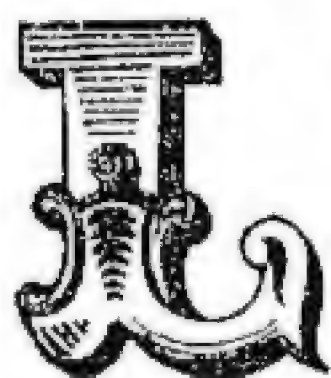
Come, come, whoever you may be,
come again.
And be you non-believer,
Magian or idolator,
come again.

Ours is not a Dergah of despair!
Though you may have broken
your repentance a hundred times,
come again.

As Allah Almighty opens His doors to all His servants, so do we accept our Lord's servants. We are not fanatics who spend their lives interrogating those who seek to quench their thirst at the fountain. This is the way of our Grandsheikh, who declared: "I am an advocate for all the Children of Adam on the Last Day". When someone arrives at our doorstep, we know who sent him, so we can't refuse.



Love is Lovely



Love is lovely to the Lord and to His servants. If you do anything with love it should be accepted by your Lord, and He should make it tasteful for you. If you love your work it will be easy for you to do, if not, it will only be a burden. The Lord says: "I am not in need of your worship, I am only seeking the love with which it is offered." Oh servants of the Lord, Oh believers, you must not overlook this point. Don't be like slaves rowing in the galley of a ship - if you pray, you must pray with love not by force, as if a slavedriver were standing over you with a whip! Allah never appreciates such forced devotions. Now we are trying to perform all the practices but forgetting to ask for Divine Love, so we are becoming like mechanical robots, or like people performing gymnastics.

Allah has asked us to engage our bodies in His worship and in service to His creation through charity and good deeds, but what must be the fruit of those actions? If the fruit is not love it is a bitter fruit and is rejected. If our worship causes Love of God to grow in our hearts, then we must keep to that practice and continue on our way; and if we are keeping the company of a spiritual teacher, and find that through keeping his company love

of God is awakening in our hearts, then we must follow him closely.

The Love of God is not easy to attain, for we cannot imagine Him; therefore, He Almighty has made the Prophets apostles of His Love. Allah's Beloved, the Seal of Prophets, Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was such a pure medium for the transmission of that love that the hearts of his companions were overwhelmed with his love, and were transported to the love of God. He was the representative of Allah, who is the Absolute Truth; therefore, the Prophet declared: "Who has seen me has seen the Absolute Truth".

When a delegation of non-Muslims came to visit Medina, they were amazed at the love and respect shown to the Prophet by his companions. When they returned home they said to their leader: "We have met many emperors, kings and tribal chiefs, but never have we seen one whose subjects or courtiers treated him with such sincere love and devotion. How can this be?" They were not able to comprehend the secret of this love, as their egos caused them to deny Muhammed's prophethood. The love of the companions towards the Prophet was such that they used to say to him: "I am ready to sacrifice for you even my mother and father", which, for the Arabs, is much stronger than saying: "I would sacrifice myself for you". And in reality many of them underwent nearly unbearable hardships for the sake of their belief in the mis-

sion of the Holy Prophet: exile, disinheritance, boycott, torture and death.

Who represented the Holy Prophet after his life on Earth? Those who evoked such love. The Prophet himself described them: "Those who see them are reminded of God". He who thirsts for Divine Love must seek out such people, but in our time they are mostly hidden, and Islam has come to mean for many people only a set of rules of conduct and forms of worship - an empty shell. Who can derive taste from such a thing? Shall mosques be only gymnasiums? And now the "gym teachers" are opposing Sufi Paths, which are the ways of the heart, ways that lead to the Love of God.

Our Lord has given us an instrument that measures not your blood pressure but our "love pressure" and our goal is to make it high! Yes, seek to improve with every new day, for the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever does not improve with each day is losing ground." What does this mean? It doesn't mean that if we pray forty rakats of prayer today, we should pray forty-one tomorrow and forty - two the next day. No, that is not required, what is intended is that you fill your worship with ever more love of your Lord, so that He will observe: "My servant has sent Me more love today than yesterday. "One of our Grandsheikhs summarized perfectly what I am trying to say: "An atom's weight of love is worth more than seventy years' worship without love":

Love is the Mortar of all Prayer



As we were coming to the mosque today I saw a billboard that read: "Everyone Needs Standards". I didn't understand what this could mean, but just then the traffic light turned red, so that we stopped right in front of the sign. Then I looked more closely and noticed that someone had vandalized the sign, and with a pen had crossed out "Standards", and written instead: "Love not Standards", so that the billboard now read: "Everyone needs Love, not Standards".

If one is open to wisdom he may take wisdom from every side, and so, Glory to Allah, this bit of vandalism has given me a topic for this lecture. Yes, that person was right, and this recalls to mind a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, in which he prayed to God :

"Oh Allah, I ask You to grant me the love of You and the love of those whom You love, and grant me, Oh my Lord, the love of those actions which lead me to the love of You".

To ask our Lord to open up our hearts to His

Divine Love is the most important request we can make of Him in our prayers, as nothing can take the place of love. The Holy Prophet, who is called the Beloved of Allah, whom Allah created with the yeast of love, and whom Allah loved so much He dedicated the creation to him, even this beloved Prophet asked Allah for Divine Love — why? Because who tastes of that love asks for more. Whose heart is like a rock will not ask God for this love, but those who have had the slightest taste of that love know that it is the key to all spiritual progress, to mercy, beauty, wisdom, to all favours that God may bestow upon His servants. Therefore, the Holy Prophet taught all mankind what is precious in this life.

And then his prayer continued: "And grant me the love of those who love You". The first level, "Love of God", is the Station of the Prophets, and you can't step from the bottom of the stairway to the top in one step. Allah Almighty is the Transcendent Being — you can't even begin to fathom anything about Him Almighty — but it is easy to love those who represent His Love among mankind, for it is much easier for us to begin to understand and love human beings like ourselves. You will find nothing in their hearts but the Love of God; therefore, loving them is a means to approach the Divine Love.

Lastly, the Holy Prophet asks for the love of those actions which lead to the love of God, actions

which carry blessings with them, which soften our hearts and weaken our greed and selfishness. These are the actions encouraged by our Lord through the example of His Prophets, actions ordered and recommended in His Holy Books. And, although in the beginning our inner state may not correspond to these saintly actions, by engaging our limbs in what pleases our Lord, He will strengthen our hearts thereby.

These are the three levels of love for which the Holy Prophet prayed, and the wisdom reflected in this prayer is proof enough of the veracity of Muhammad, peace be upon him. While Believers must always ask for that love, Satan is ever at war with such a notion, for he knows that once love has entered the heart of one of his slaves, that slave is lost to him, for he will not be able to snare him anymore with this world's pleasures. He who has tasted that love may not even notice those pleasures, or may regard them as only a drop in an ocean.

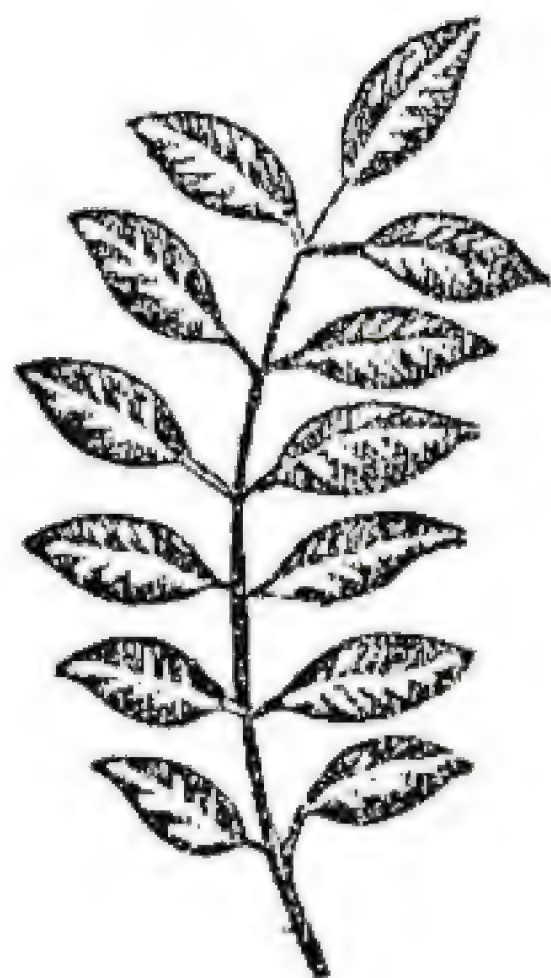
Once, as Moses, upon whom be peace, was headed toward Mount Sinai, he passed the cave of a hermit. The hermit emerged and called after Moses: "Oh Moses, please ask our Lord to bestow upon me just an atom's weight of His Divine Love". Moses agreed to do this, then continued on his way. Later, when Moses was addressing his Lord, he petitioned on behalf of that hermit. The Lord replied: "I will grant that servant of My Divine Love, but not in

the amount he requested. I will only grant him the tiniest fraction of an atom's weight of that love".

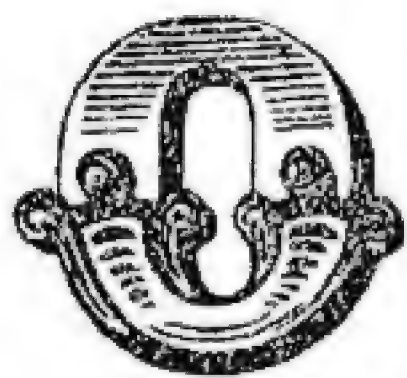
When Moses returned from the mountain, he quickly went to see what was happening to the hermit, to see what effect such a tiny dose of Divine Love might have had on him. When he arrived he was startled to see that where the cave had been a part of the mountain was blown away, and in place of that cave there was a deep chasm in the Earth. "Oh servant of my Lord", he cried out, "what has happened, where are you?" Then Moses looked down the chasm and saw the hermit sitting down there as if in another world, completely overwhelmed by that love.

Why did that hermit ask for a portion of Divine Love? Because he was worshipping but feeling nothing; he felt an emptiness in his heart that could only be filled by that love. Without love, worship is tasteless and useless; therefore, we must be sure to build our worship upon a strong foundation of love and to bake love into the bricks of the building of our devotional practice. This is more than an analogy, for even physical buildings are either alive with the love of their builders, or dead from their hard-heartedness. Therefore, old buildings often emanate a good feeling because of the love and goodness of those who built them. This is especially true of old mosques and churches, for their original congregations built them for the sake of their Lord's love and in an attitude of sincere piety.

There is often a very strong feeling of the Divine Presence in old mosques, but have you ever felt such an atmosphere in the new showpiece - of - sterile - architecture - mosques? No, it is impossible, you may feel only an inner contraction inside of such concrete hills. They have left the love out of the mortar: the most important ingredient is missing.



A Lesson from Ibn Arabi's Fall off his Donkey



nce Sheikh Muhyuddin Ibn-al Arabi was riding on a donkey (at that time owning a donkey was like owning a Rolls Royce in our time — not everyone could afford one!) surrounded by his disciples, passing through the countryside in silence. All of a sudden, the donkey bucked, and Sheikh Muhyuddin fell to the ground, but his foot caught in the stirrup so that, for a few paces, the donkey dragged him along on his face. Then the disciples rushed upon the donkey to free their Sheikh from this dangerous and undistinguished position, but he prevented them, saying: "Wait a moment until it becomes clear to me in what verse of the Holy Qur'an this event is mentioned." In great distress the murids waited, obeying his wishes, until after a few moments he said: "Alright, now you may free me." So they set him back on the donkey and continued on their way.

Sheikh Muhyuddin was one of those who received the light of perception with which he could discover meanings hidden in the Holy Qur'an, as Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an:

“Oh people, you may find everything in this Qur'an: large and small, wet and dry”.

Even this meeting must be mentioned there and also what we are saying. Perhaps to some of us this seems to be quite a claim, but just consider a drop of water: you may look and say: “This is just a drop of water, nothing more”. But were you to put that drop under a microscope, you would be presented with quite a different picture. Because your view has changed, so has your thought, and you would say: “That drop is a sea, and so many things are swimming in it.” Where are they? You can't see them with the naked eye, but with the microscope you can see millions of bacteria, and even that is only a small number compared to what we know to be inside that drop, too small to detect with a simple microscope. Even with a microscope we are unable to see the molecules of water consisting of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen: even with an electronic microscope you can't see this. And these atoms themselves consist of nuclei and electrons.

From ignorance one may say: “What is this talk? That is only a single drop of water”, but science confirms what we say. The same is true of the Holy Qur'an, for it was revealed as a guide to all mankind, not just to a few people living at the time of the Holy Prophet in Mecca and Medina. It was given to all mankind for all epochs; and if life were to continue eternally on Earth, the Holy

Qur'ân would still be relevant to the lives of those people of the future. Therefore, everyone must be able to derive benefit from the Ocean of the Holy Qur'an; but we are so pre-occupied with trivia that it is impossible for us to see for ourselves. If however, we can concentrate our spiritual powers we will have no trouble recognizing subtle signs.

The Holy Prophet himself had the most complete knowledge of the inner meanings of the Holy Qur'an, because of the Divine Attributes of perception that the Lord bestowed upon him. After him, the Friends of God, like Sheikh Muhyuddin, have also been awakened to the existence of these attributes within themselves. Sheikh Muhyuddin knew that all that occurs is pre-destined and does not happen by chance or accident. You can't take one step out of that "divine program" — it is impossible. When you understand this point you may live in contentment, and say: "I move in accordance with my Lord's Will, and though I may make an intention to do something with my will, if He does not desire it to reach fruition, His Will will overcome mine". And the same is true for something you would never desire like falling off of a donkey. If it is written for you nothing can prevent it.

Then Sheikh Muhyuddin recited the Holy Verse: "Say: Nothing will befall us except what Allah has written for us. He is our Lord". You must believe that He Almighty is your Protector, your Saviour, and that He is guiding all things in the best of

ways. He Almighty has informed us that this world is only a place of trials, that it is not all and everything, only a prelude to eternal life, therefore we must not blame Him for the vicissitudes of life, nor hate Him for creating a world that abounds in death, suffering and injustice. Rather, we must believe in His promise of final justice, and do our best to advocate justice in this realm, as He Almighty has ordered us: "Strive toward good actions". We must not believe that our Lord has destined evil for us.

We must surrender to His Will, and we will attain inner peace, having the burden of the "worry for the morrow" lifted from our shoulders. Whoever believes that God is his saviour feels himself in the best of hands, and will not succumb to hopelessness. Look, as long as you are a conscientious parent, your daughter is not too concerned about where her next meal is going to come from, nor whether she will have a warm bed to sleep in tonight. And though, as a good parent you may be training her to take on responsibility, requiring her to be of use in the kitchen or to make her own bed, everything is in order because you are overseeing her efforts. In the same way our Lord provides us with all we need in our lives and the intelligence to use what He provides, overseeing our actions. We must, therefore, be at least as confident about our daily sustenance as that little girl.

This is the nature of our relationship with our

Lord: He wills and we intend to follow His Will. If we are mad enough to oppose His will, that is our freedom of choice. Yes, He permits us, if so we desire, to declare in a boastful and obstinate way: "I'm going to do what I want". But we are then only like people who are on a ship, walking from bow to stern, thinking that we are advancing in the opposite direction of the ship's course.

The Holy Qur'an says: "He is the One guiding everything in its proper direction". He who understands this will never indulge in saying, "If only". One of the companions of the Prophet used to say: "I would rather eat fire than say 'if only' ". Whoever can leave that way of thinking behind him has found safety in surrender, and should find a whole new horizon opening out in front of him, a horizon free of envy, doubt, regret and worry.

Question: "How can we decide or be responsible for anything in our lives, when it is predestined whether we will go right or left?"

The Sheikh said:

Everything must be pre - destined, but, as we are mankind, Allah Almighty's most highly honoured creatures, we have been honoured, and tested with the granting of our own personal will. We are not like other creatures, behaving strictly according to instinct, but have been honoured with the ability to consciously decide what we will do: whether we will try to accord with what we know to be His command (which has been revealed to

us through His Holy Books) or whether we try to rebel and go the destructive path.

As I said, we must always assume that our Lord has decreed the best for us, and we must never, therefore, excuse ourselves, saying: "God willed me to do evil". We have our own personal will, and we must do our best with it, but whatever the case may be, we never escape our destiny, but move through it.

The train comes to a fork in the tracks: one track leads to Germany and the other to Switzerland. The driver gives a signal as to which way he wants to go, and the switchman cooperates by putting him on whichever track he desires. That is an honour for us as human beings; that we are not animals to be tied and carried.

The best attitude is for us to say to our Lord: "Inspire me to do what is best". For example, our brother offered to take me for a ride in these mountains. Since he knows these mountains best I will not tell him where to go, but will trust him to take me the most scenic route with the loveliest panorama. I left my will to his, and he is taking me: and I trust that I should be pleased when I follow him. If I were to exercise my will and tell him where to go, I am sure that we would be lost very soon. He may ask me which of two scenic drives I prefer, and describe them, but he is not going to drive me over a cliff.

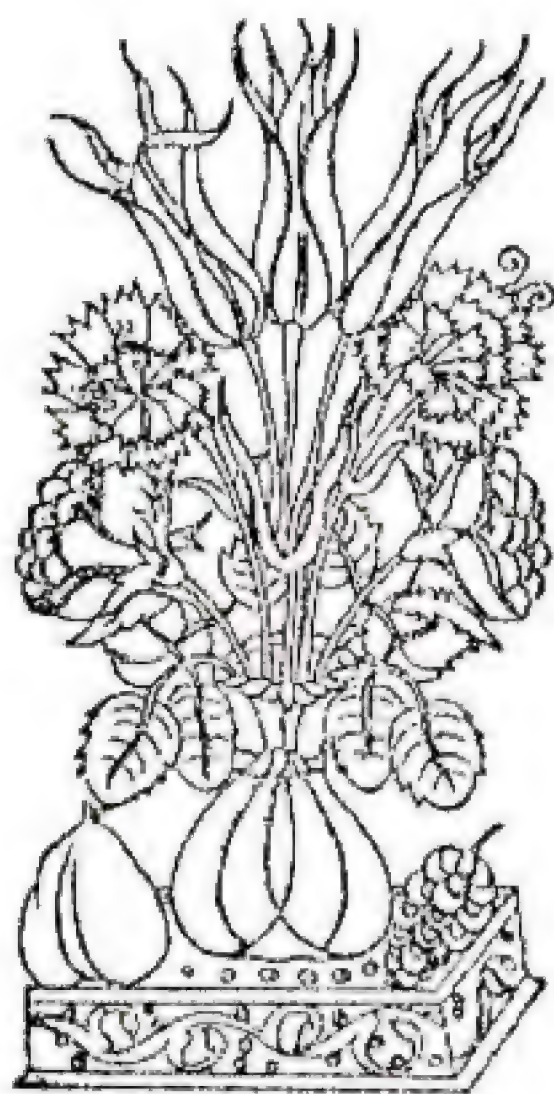
We are heavenly creatures, but tied to earth,

and to know what our Lord desires of us we must develop wings. To know your Lord's will you must cut yourself off from thoughts of this world, and, if only for one minute, put yourself in the presence of your Lord, and ask Him to show you the right way to follow in any matter. He Almighty may show you a red or a green light, that you may know whether to stop or to proceed (But in Turkey, whether the light is red or green we charge across the intersection!).

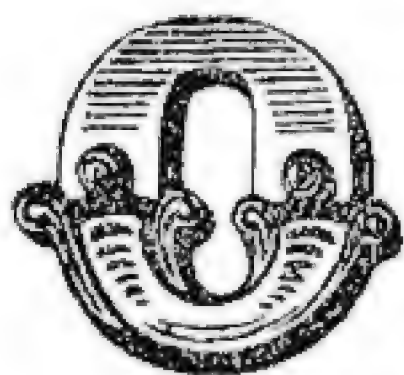
You must address your Lord: "Oh my Lord, You are powerful enough to do everything, while I am completely powerless. You know everything and I know nothing. I am in doubt about such-and-such a matter facing me in my life. Oh my Lord, if it is good for me open up the way to it, and if it is harmful please keep it from me. And I am asking You, Oh my Lord, for a clear sign to guide me in this matter."

But to do this you must be serious, and it must be a matter of real importance; then, you must be genuinely confounded and open to guidance. You must take a shower and then go to a silent place where you won't be disturbed, and ask your Lord for guidance. This is a method that anyone who is bewildered about his future course may use, and he should receive a clear signal in a dream or waking. There is only one condition: that you must not ask about anything that is already quite clearly indicated. If you come to a street which

says: "One Way" with an arrow pointing in the opposite direction, or a sign that says: "Dead End", the signs are clear and there is no need to ask. There is no need to clarify what is already clear, but when you are confused ask your Lord and He will honour you with an answer.



He who is without Shoes, Look at the one without Feet



f all of our ego's characteristics, without a doubt envy is the worst, for an envious person, even if he were in paradise would feel himself to be in hell. And the irony of this characteristic is, that the more enviable positions people seem to attain in life, the more severely afflicted with envy they themselves become. Therefore, envy is most rampant among the rich and privileged who are disturbed by the fact that others may be even richer or of higher rank than themselves, and wish to be the only ones to possess everything. Among the common people envy of the rich is normal, but they don't envy each other as much as the upper classes do.

Yes, it is ironic that those who are more educated, who claim to have a better understanding than the masses should be blind to the harm they are inflicting upon themselves, oblivious to the fire that is rapidly burning them up. If they are so intelligent they should realize that their Lord brings people into this life and sets them in different conditions, and that despite the discrepancy in their outward ranks, all have been honoured by their Lord and bestowed with dignity. Whoever

has been favoured with even the slightest degree of wisdom must know this and so be free of envy. God's Holy Prophets and their Inheritors, the Friends of God, have always reminded mankind of this fact: each and every one of them has been honoured by being created as a human being, and need envy no one. Our Lord, in the Holy Qur'an, encourages us to not only understand this point, but to declare it openly, when He Almighty says:

“(Oh people), proclaim your Lord's favours unto you”.

We were nothing and our Lord brought us into existence; can there be any favour greater than this? And our Lord informs us that all things in existence are busy glorifying their Lord, even atoms. Atoms, too, have life, because without life it is impossible to be in existence. Perhaps we can say that the atoms' life is of a very different kind from our own, but they are also perfect in their own right and are praising their Lord for the grant of that perfection.

Those who have attained certainty of faith, who have a light shining in their hearts, may perceive even inanimate objects glorifying their Lord. One of the miracles bestowed upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, was that, one day he held up a handful of pebbles and all those present were made to hear those pebbles glorifying their Lord. All of creation participates in this glorification: rocks, earth, water, plants,

trees, leaves, flowers, fish, birds, ants, bees, roam Allah's spacious Earth, swim in His seas, fly in His skies, or to just be a part of that creation — all are grateful, except, that is, for dissatisfied mankind. The Holy Qur'an states:

“Everything in existence glorifies Allah, you just don't understand their glorification”, and also:

“Hast thou not seen how to God bow all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth, the sun and the moon, the stars and the mountains, the trees and the beasts, and many of mankind? And many merit the chastisement: and whom God abases, there is none to honour him. God does whatsoever He will.”

Notice that “some of mankind” is the only exception to the rule. This is because all of creation is obedient to Allah by nature, and only mankind has been presented with the option to praise the Lord and to find inner peace or to be ungrateful and live in the hellfires of discontent and envy. So what about you, oh ungrateful mankind? You may own a Rolls-Royce and live in a splendid palace, but if you are ungrateful you are beneath the level of inanimate objects. And I am sorry to say that in our times widespread envy is destroying all humanity.

Nowadays, whoever is obliged to ride a bus is surely envious of car-owners; and how should it

not be so with spiritual values in such a state of eclipse? A mediæval Persian Sufi poet, Sheikh Saadi Shirazi, wrote about a person who was so poor he was not able to afford a pair of shoes. This person used to complain incessantly about his condition, but the more he complained the less inclined anyone was to buy him shoes. One day he came across a person who had no legs, and this sight caused him to repent, saying: "Oh my Lord, thank you for giving me legs with which to walk!" Yes, we must consider the blessings we have been given.

The other day I visited a man who is waiting to die of a terminal disease, a disease which does not leave him eat nor drink. If that person possessed all the gold contained in the Bank of England, do you not think that he would gladly give it all if he thought he could thereby prolong his life? Does anyone think that he would refuse? You must consider what you have been given! Would any of you agree to give me both of your eyes in exchange for all that gold, or even if, in exchange, I were to make you king of the world? (Now if I offered such power or wealth for one eye, so many foolish people would readily agree!) Of what use would that kingdom be to you then? You would be known as "the blind king".

But people are foolishly saying: "Why does that person own a Rolls-Royce and not I?" "Why does he live in a palace and I live in a flat?" "Why does

he own a business and I have to work for wages?" "Why is that person a queen and I am a subject?" You must be thankful that Allah Almighty put Her Majesty the Queen on that throne! A wise man observed: "Allah has placed His slaves in the positions He has chosen for them."

One of history's most renowned Sufi Sheikhs, and one of the golden Naqshbandi chain of transmission, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, Sultan al-Arifin, was once passing through a narrow alley with his followers. All of a sudden a small dog appeared at the other end and was alarmed at the emergence of so many people; then Abu Yazid stepped aside in order to let the dog pass, and his followers did the same. Someone said to him: "Oh Aba Yazid, you are a distinguished Grandsheikh, and you are walking with your respectable entourage - how can you give way to a dirty dog?" Then Abu Yazid replied, and in his answer is to be found a lesson for all humanity: "Oh my sons, when that dog appeared and saw his way blocked by so many formidable figures, he said to me, 'Oh Sheikh, don't be proud of being a Sheikh and a man, thinking yourself above me in station. No, you must know that we are equals in creation, for it is only the Creator - yours and mine - who dressed me in the form of a dog, and I am grateful and pleased with my Lord. He dressed you in a human form; you didn't create it yourself, so don't be proud!' When it was addressing me in this manner I felt ashamed in front

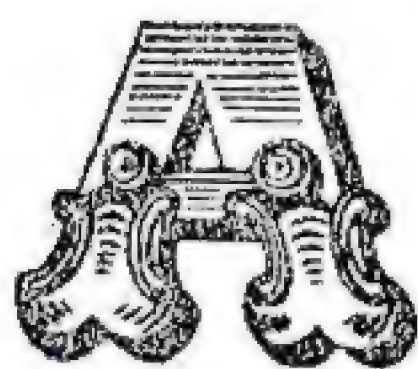
of my Lord and knew that it is wrong to look down on any creature, as it is Allah who created each one.

Once I was walking with our Grandsheikh through the streets and noticed a rock lying in the road. Since it is a meritorious action to remove such obstacles from the way, I decided to move it, but being too lazy to bend down and take it away with my hand, I just kicked it aside with my foot. Then Grandsheikh reprimanded me, saying: "Oh Nazim Efendi, you must never do that again. You must consider Who brought that rock into existence, and so maintain for it proper respect."

Such vision is the vision of the People of Truth, those who have perfectly grasped the teachings of Islam, and that perfect understanding leads one to respect everyone and everything in existence. And if such is the level of respect maintained for a dog or a rock, what about our relations with our fellow man? How can envy live among real believers? It is impossible. But we are only imitators: that is why envy spreads through the world community like cancer through a body, and now that cancer is attacking individuals, nations and the whole world.

Know that it is only this rotten characteristic that is preventing you from attaining the breakthrough. Leave envy and you may approach your goal, and the nearness of Angels, Prophets and the Friends of God.

Our Stand Against all Cruelty



bu Yazid al-Bistami, a giant among our Grandsheikhs, once explained that Islam, in its essence, is built upon two great pillars; that everything we are exhorted to do or to believe in can be understood as falling into two broad categories. One pillar is the acceptance of Allah as our Supreme Lord, and our striving to both respect His exalted Station and recognize our true position as His humble servants. The second pillar is our being merciful, our showing compassion towards all of God's creatures.

These two categories encompass every aspect of our lives; and when we evaluate our actions according to the spirit of these broad principles, we may derive benefit from Islam in the way it was intended.

Everything we do must be dedicated to our Lord; that is why we initiate all our actions with the invocation of His Attributes of Mercy, as Allah Almighty Himself invoked these attributes of mercy when revealing the first verses of the Holy Qur'an (and when revealing succeeding chapters), by saying: "In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent and Most Munificent". Invoking these attributes of mercy is the key to success

and the acceptability in the Divine Presence of our deeds of mercy towards our fellow creatures. You must always remain aware that without His Divine Help you can't succeed in any attempt at good actions. Indeed, without His support you can move neither hand nor foot.

Now that you have devoted your life and all of your deeds to your Lord, invoking always His Attributes of Mercy, you must strive to show pity to all creatures. And even if you need to kill any creature you must do so as painlessly as possible. That is why there is a very specifically prescribed method of slaughtering animals for food, a way that involves the least suffering for the victim. When we carefully observe that ancient method of slaughtering we incur no guilt, but now people are so careless and so heedless of these Divine Instructions and of the suffering of the victim, that they risk being blamed by their Lord for their cruelty.

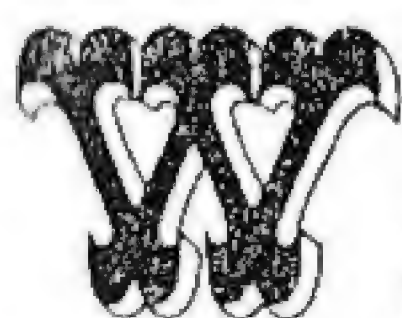
Even when exterminating harmful insects or animals, it is necessary to do so in the most painless way possible. And it is absolutely forbidden in Islamic Law to kill any living thing by fire. Allah Almighty has reserved for Himself the right to burn who has earned such a fate in the fires of hell: He Almighty has extended that right to no one else. It is forbidden to burn fields because of all the insects that are burned in the process, and most emphatically it is forbidden to kill any human being

by fire. Neither is it permissible in the case of execution (No burning at the stake!) nor in the case of war (No guns, no bombs!). But now Nations are preparing to burn up the entire world with fire. All modern weapons are basically fire-arms: that is prohibited. First of all, it is only permissible to wage war when all attempts at a peaceful settlement have been exhausted, and then only with cold iron - spears, swords, etc. Fire is only for cooking and heating.

We must be merciful. Don't even step on an ant without reason: it lives too and sees that you are approaching to kill it, feels fear and tries to escape. It feels pain and fears death, therefore it runs away. You must remember that it too glorifies the Lord, and so, if it doesn't harm you, you mustn't kill it, and if you do you will be held accountable. The message of Islam is mercy for all creatures, and mercy is the underlying theme of the teachings of all Sufi teachers.



Golden Coin and Golden Rule : Both Have Turned into Daper



hen Allah Almighty created Adam, He caused a rain of trouble to sprinkle on him for forty years, then He caused a rain of ecstasy to shower upon him for one year. Therefore, man may find such a proportion of suffering to pleasure throughout his life. How does our Lord cause trouble to manifest through the course of our lives? Through our contact with other people. We are destined to constantly have to deal with others, most of whom are mainly interested in fulfilling their own desires without much regard for anyone else's well-being.

It is our fate to be given a nature that requires social contact with our fellow humans. And even if each person were to have a mountain to himself, in order to remain far removed from the bother and trouble caused by social life, we would find people abandoning their retreats and seeking each other's company in the valleys .

Why is it that people, though drawn to each other, often would like to flee from human associ-

ation? Each person has his own will and his idea of how things should be done, and it is most difficult to obtain another's compliance with those wishes, to influence him into doing what you want done. If you can come to exercise authority over a small circle of people, the nuclear family for example, your influence decreases immediately when we pass to the next circle of relations, the extended family. And so on down the line: the farther people are removed from your direct influence, the more difficult to assert one's authority or advocate one's position - and one weak link in the chain will cause the complete rupture of that chain of influence. Therefore, your ability to make others conform to your wishes is limited, and this is a cause of great frustration for people.

When Adam and Eve were alone they were able to agree that Adam would have ultimate authority in matters, and when they had children they deferred to his authority, but when the world started to be populated by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, his authority waned and they became rebellious. By the time he died he had realized how powerless he was.

Everything that happens to mankind in general, every current that passes through affects our personalities. Some of these currents build in us inner force and rectitude, others cause these qualities to vanish. It is our challenge to face them all and to strengthen our personalities in any case:

you must be firm enough to face every event, the good and the bad alike. You may seek to escape from disliked circumstances, but usually, in the process of fleeing you will come up against something even more formidable. We have a saying: "He fled from the rain to the hail". You may affirm the truth of this saying from your own experience. But what can we do? We can only learn forbearance: to increase in spiritual fortitude through being patient with the harm inflicted by others. If we react to every evil we will be burned up with rage, and will have gained nothing. What we need to be able to attack evil is, first of all, a "cool head" not clouded by impulsive rage. This is what all Prophets through all epochs have taught.

The great source of suffering in the twentieth century is impatience. Especially in the West patience has become a virtually extinct characteristic, and, contrary to being encouraged by society, even in theory, it is scorned and seen as being the attribute of stupid and exploited people. People in the "free world" are taught that they must demand, and have the right to demand, everything immediately, and even, ideally, for it to appear in front of them before they ever thought of desiring it—that is efficiency. To call such a society "Twentieth century civilization" is a misnomer, for civilized people are patient, and real civilization tries to instil patience by esteeming it as a virtue.

Because this quality is lacking, the higher peo-

ple's standard of living climbs, the more they come to expect everything to be instantly available to them at the touch of a button or flick of a switch, and when anything, God forbid, should go wrong, they are infuriated by the delay of what they expect to be instantly provided. It is terrible to even think about the condition people would be in if their systems were to fail on a larger scale: they haven't the slightest idea of how to provide themselves with what they need for their lives. If their machines cease to function they will die - that is all.

An even uglier aspect of this trend is that people are not satisfied just to have everything available at their fingertips, but want to have everything for themselves to the exclusion of others, to have a monopoly of all wealth and pleasure. With such characteristics how shall anyone be happy? Modern education and the values passed through the media give the signal: "Go out and get what you want; if you can grab it, it is yours, that is only fair". What we need to understand is that each has his portion, that what is yours is yours and what is his is his. How many of your possessions can you carry on your back? Even a moneybelt is bothersome: so how shall you carry someone else's portion? If you attempt to eat even one other person's portion you will be sick, and if you wear another's clothing in addition to your own you will be too hot. To begrudge people their portions

is excessively stupid, the way to destroy your health and your soul.

We are in need of a different kind of education, an education that teaches us that everything in this life has been apportioned to its owner through Divine Wisdom, but instead we are encouraging such bad attributes that every good others enjoy is a thorn in our sides.

Once, in the time of Moses, peace be upon him, as he was headed toward Mount Sinai to engage in private discourse with the Lord Almighty, a poor man approached Moses and said: "Oh Moses, I am so poor. Please ask your Lord to give me something to alleviate my poverty". Moses promised him that he would remember him to his Lord, then went on his way. When Moses addressed his Lord, he pleaded the case of that man as promised, and in response Allah said: "Oh Moses, tell him that whatever he asks I will grant him, under the condition that whatever he asks he must also ask for his neighbour, and I will grant it to both of them. Whatever his heart desires — herds, riches, land — I will give them both to him and his neighbour, for I am the Owner of Endless Bounties, I am the Lord, your God."

When Moses descended from Mount Sinai that man was anxiously awaiting to hear the Lord's response to his plea. "What news, Moses?" "Good news! The Lord will give you everything you desire, the only condition being that you must ask

it for your neighbour as well." Then the man became very angry and said: "If He is not going to give it to me to the exclusion of my neighbour, I am not asking for it, nor will I accept it!"

Now we claim to be civilized people, but who among us may be heard asking: "Oh my Lord, make her as beautiful as I am! I am not happy being a beauty queen while such a nice girl remains ugly." Or who can be heard saying: "Oh my Lord, please give that person a Rolls-Royce too! I am ashamed to drive mine unless he has one as well." Or what Prime Minister can be heard saying: "Oh God, make everyone Prime Minister!" I don't think that I can find anyone praying or wishing for these favours on others.

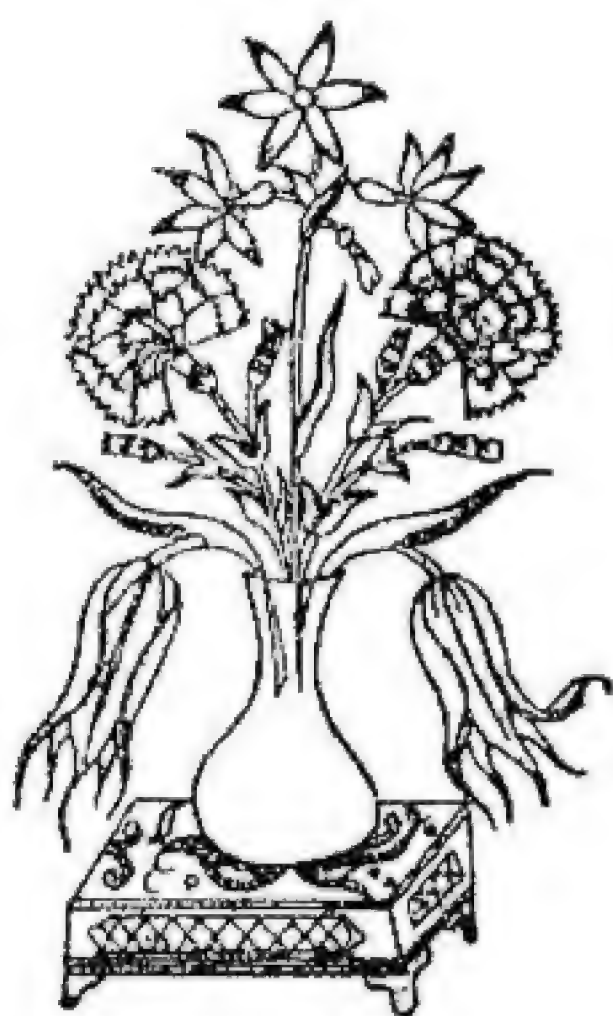
Our egos give us this wild selfishness, but the goal of the Sufi Path is to transform such wild characteristics into beneficial ones, as one may graft bark from a sweet fruit-bearing tree onto the trunk of a wild tree that gives only sour fruits. Then, when the graft takes hold, the branches of that wild tree give sweet fruit, although the roots are still wild. Generally, mankind grows as it was planted with no care being taken to transform its sour fruits, and if given no attention, people die in the same condition. You must understand that all of the Holy Prophets were "gardeners" grafting divine characteristics onto people's wild personalities.

Most of you attending this meeting are Chris-

tians and Jews. Christ's mission was to impart divine attributes unto people, and the same is true of all of the Prophets of the Old Testament, but you have lost sight of that fact. After Jesus Christ, the Prophet Muhammad came with the same mission, but we lost sight of that too. What was the result of all this heedlessness? Throughout history each group wanted to think of itself as "possessing God to the exclusion of others", and has never liked the idea that God hears the prayers of the other group as well, and considers its merits by His own criteria. Not only do our greedy characteristics blind us to the truth of our Lord being the Lord of All, but even within religions so many sects have sprung up, mainly so that people can claim to have the sole possession of God. The result of this has been that Muslims hate Christians and vice versa; but our Prophets were not sent to teach us to hate each other: And now Christians hate Christians, and Muslims hate Muslims, and in general everyone has turned even on his own brother.

Look, our Lord said: "Tell that person to ask for his neighbour what he asks for himself", that is the commandment which is called the golden rule, but now, just as gold currency has been replaced first by silver and then by paper, so the golden rule has long been out of circulation in our relations. But you must know that your worth is determined by the magnanimity of your heart. In earlier times virtues were recognized as such-

though perhaps seldom attained - nowadays they are held in no esteem. People are valued solely according to their beauty or wealth, and one has come to evaluate relationships on the basis of the potential for material gain. This is a shame, and I am asking our Lord to forgive us.



The Disappearance of Virtue from the Face of the Earth



When the Angel Gabriel made his last visitation to the Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon both of them, he informed the Prophet: "This is the last time I shall come to you with revelation, and, furthermore, with your passing, Prophethood will be a closed book: no more will I come to Earth with Divine Commands". The Holy Prophet then asked him: "Is it really to be so that you, who have brought Divine Guidance to Allah's Prophets throughout history will never again visit the Earth?" Gabriel replied: "Indeed I will return in accordance with my Lord's Divine Command, not to deliver guidance, but to take back, one by one, all of the virtues that have flourished through Divine Guidance. This is my Lord's plan: that the spiritual condition of mankind, should deteriorate before the coming of the great events of the Last Times."

"First, I will come to take away Divine Knowledge, so that ignorance will cover the Earth like an ocean, and the people of that time will fall into it in hordes. Those people will not declare,

"There is no god but the One True God, Allah', but will claim, 'There is no God'. (This is the epitomy of ignorance, for you may know everything, but if you don't recognize the Owner of all and the Creator of your own being, you are ultimately ignorant). Yes, I will come to remove the knowledge of all higher realms and leave them in the darkness of ignorance."

"Then, again I will come and take away 'barakah' " (Barakah means being blessed by God with adequate sustenance, and consequently feeling contentment with our allotted portion). Nowadays, people's needs have proliferated to such an extent that no one can begin to possess a tenth of what they imagine themselves to need. Despite the fact that their pockets are bulging with money all they can be heard saying is: "Not enough, not enough". I can remember, during my childhood that people used to earn about three piasters a day - it was just a small silver coin. Now in our country I don't think that one can subsist on five pounds a day - and what about here in England! Yet, in countries where there are kings and queens there is still more "barakah" than in republics. There used to be shepherds who earned only one piaster a day plus food and shelter for themselves and their families, and they were happy - for what does a humble person really need beyond food, shelter and some money for clothing etc.? But those are bygone

days... "barakah" has been taken up and people are swimming in an ocean of discontent .

Then Gabriel said: "I will come to take away mercy from the Earth". For example, I saw in the newspaper yesterday that some people who looked like robots went on the rampage at a football game and killed many people. Surely their heads are like footballs, full of air, and their hearts like rocks, containing no mercy. This is but a simple example of how beastly man can become when there resides no mercy in his heart, and indeed, worse than beasts, for beasts kill for food, not for fun. Islam always opposes such barbarism, as our Prophet is the Prophet of Mercy; but look, in our time, two Islamic countries have been engaged in a useless, protracted and bloody war, mercy has been taken from their hearts as well, and they also can boast of having attached footballs to their shoulders where the head should be.

"And finally", continued Gabriel, "I will come to take away modesty and chastity". It is not difficult to see that this has been accomplished already. Nowadays, people walk the streets in attire that their mothers and grandmothers would have been ashamed to wear in their bedrooms.

And this is what the Angel Gabriel informed the Holy Prophet of fifteen centuries ago, and he, in turn, informed us that the time we are living in is virtually bereft of the qualities that make human life human. And, indeed, we find ourselves

living in such a time as he described. There is no more knowledge leading people to goodness, to honesty, to honour, here and hereafter. People are studying, but to what end? They are only learning to support the kingdom of Satan on Earth, to help perpetuate that state of affairs that is rapidly bringing the whole world to the brink of disaster, and creating such alienation in people that so many would rather throw themselves out of windows than go on living, and so many others live only to inflict suffering on others. Even in religious schools, where the elements of godly living should be taught, that knowledge has been distorted out of recognition and soured, like a glass of milk into which a lemon has been squeezed, so that even those with a basis in Divine Knowledge can barely distinguish right from wrong anymore, what to speak of doing what is right.

Islam brought the world respect and mercy, but we have lost them both. And despite the odds we face, we must ever strive to develop those virtually extinct good characteristics in ourselves. And we are comforted by the knowledge that our Merciful Lord will not fail to judge us leniently, as we are trying our best to see something through the obscurity of these times, and we are looking for the light at the end of the tunnel.



Is there no Escape ?



h suffering people, you may attain peace only through the remembrance of your Lord. Nowadays most people feel themselves to be suffering , to be in misery, and the question most often asked is: "To where may I escape from my problems?" The coming of such times is predicted in all Holy Books, and finally, also, in the Holy Qur'an, which describes suffering people who ask: "To where may we escape?" The portrayal of such times makes the hearts of believers shrink in horror, but, as I look at the human beings of our time I see pain written on their faces and hear them shouting this very question. But no matter where you run, you are bound to find a mountain of troubles even more formidable than the one from which you have escaped.

Now people are all trying to escape from their situations. Orientals flee to the West in search of freedom and wealth, while Westerners flee from a sea of materialism to the Orient to find a traditional way of life. Peasants can no longer stand to live in the countryside and flee to cities seeking the "civilized" life, and city-dwellers, ill with civilization's diseases flock to the countryside to seek a wholesome lifestyle. But so often, even when people

manage to escape from one place to another, one culture to another, one climate to another or from one marriage to another, seeking relief from their miseries, they only find themselves faced with another set of miseries, and then they fall into disillusionment and hopelessness.

The present state of affairs is the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet in which he predicted that there would come a time when people would pass through cemeteries and say: "If only we were among you, or if only you could be in our places and we in yours! You are at rest, but we are in torment; oh, how lucky you are to have lived in earlier times and never to have seen these days!"

So where is a shelter from these miseries to be found? Allah Almighty answers the question of those desperate people, saying: "Flee to your Lord!" The answer is very simple, but our egos rebel against our fleeing in that direction, saying: "No, I won't permit you to flee to anyone but me alone, nor to take another shelter than mine, because I have my own will, my own knowledge and my own ideals: they are all we need, so come into my shelter!" But verily the ego's shelter is full of leaks, it cannot keep out the downpour of tribulation!

Both the Torah and the Qur'an tell us the story of Noah, peace be upon him, and even now may we derive wisdom and a valuable lesson from the

events that occurred during the life of that most ancient Prophet. No event in history shows us more plainly how the only real shelter is with our Lord, and how the shelter created by our minds will be swept away. Noah was sent to his Nation and to all people living at his time. No Prophet was ever granted such a miraculous lifespan - nine-hundred and fifty years - but no Prophet was ever afflicted with such persistent rejection and persecution either.

Whenever he would arise and exhort his people they would stone him until he was knocked unconscious. The story is well known. Finally, after so many centuries of vain attempts to guide the people, he prayed: "Oh my Lord, You must not leave on the face of the Earth even one household of these hard-hearted people, for no child is born to them except that he becomes an even greater tyrant than his parents. If You leave them be they will lead astray even those few people who have believed in You. Oh my Lord, spare and forgive me and my family and those believers who are with us."

Then the Lord granted his prayer and resolved to destroy the wicked by sending a flood to cover the Earth, and He commanded Noah to build an ark as a shelter for the few believers and for a male and female of each kind of animal. Then Noah set out to build the Ark, not at the seaside, but in the midst of dry land. Some people asked

him: "Oh Noah, what are you building?" "I am building an Ark as a shelter against a great flood that the Lord will send upon the Earth." "Then why don't you build it by the sea instead of on this high ground, for even if it rains as you say it will, here there will only be wild torrents rushing to the sea, and you may have a rough ride down such a wild river", they said sarcastically. "No", Noah said, "this will be a flood like no other, a flood that will leave nothing high and dry, and no rivers rushing to the sea: when this rain falls all will be sea." They only laughed scornfully and went off saying: "Such an old, old man, and yet he preaches the same nonsense he always has, along with threats of a flood to scare us into his religion!"

And finally, when Noah had completed the construction of the Ark, he bade his family and all the believers to enter. All of them hastened aboard, except for one of his sons, who had been influenced by the logic of those who had ridiculed his father. He said. "I don't need to board that rickety vessel. If it really rains as you say, I will seek refuge on the top of a mountain. It never floods there, only in valleys. This is a clear natural law, and I trust my own perception and logic. I know where floods go and where they don't." Noah pleaded with him: "Oh my son, you think that you know, but you are wrong: come aboard and you will be safe!" But the son stubbornly held to his

judgement, a judgement that would have been correct in the face of any other flood the world had ever known, save this one, which inundated the Earth up to seventy yards above the peak Noah's son had climbed, and he perished.

In this tale is contained a lesson for all men who have placed their trust in the products of their own minds, and for their sake we are recounting the story of the fate of Noah's son when he took to the mountain instead of to the Ark. And in our times whole nations are seeking to escape from the ever-rising level of the misery-flood by adopting solutions that accord with their mental calculations, while not opposing their egos' dictates — they are climbing mountains instead of boarding the Ark. The proponents of such concocted solutions to the world's problems stand on mountain tops and call people to their own "high and dry" shelters. Each one calls out: "Come here! Climb this peak, not that one: Ours is the safe peak!" But slowly, slowly their island-peaks shrink in the face of the rising waters, and soon all will be submerged. To drown in the sea of misery is a terrible end.

But the key to redemption is repentance, and, therefore, in the sight of Allah, even the case of those who have run to the mountains instead of the Ark and have fallen into the sea is not hopeless, for Allah heard the prayer of Jonah from the belly of a whale: "Oh my Lord, there is no

God beside You. Glorified be Your Name! Verily, I have been a wrongdoer!" He turned to his Lord completely, and Allah saved him from that dark and terrible prison. "And this is how we rescue the believers", says the Lord; and so we must glorify Him that we may find safety from the flood of sufferings.

One person used to complain bitterly about the croaking of the frogs at night. Angrily he shouted at them: "What's all this racket about? Will you please quiet down! Every night you keep me awake with your 'rak! rak! rak!'" Then the spokesfrog of that pond replied: "Oh son of Adam, I am not lazy like you, sleeping the whole night through, I am keeping this nightly vigil and praising my Lord a hundred-thousand times. Are you not ashamed to complain that I keep you from your sleep?"

Yes, we must flee to our Lord in the face of suffering by engaging ourselves in devotion to Him. If you feel yourself being overwhelmed by waves of misery, then say: "Subhanallah, Glory to Allah", and those waves will subside. Glorify your Lord and you will be exalted in the Divine Presence, that is our solution.

The Holy Qur'an observes:

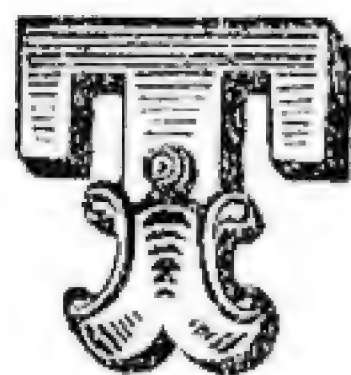
"They forgot their Lord, so He forgot them".

In reality He never forgets anyone, but as a punishment for our forgetfulness, He permits us to feel forgotten, so that we are overwhelmed by

misery. Therefore, every day people are coming to me, trying to unload a heavy burden of misery and the newspapers are bursting with stories of suffering, and, nowadays, through the television, we are presented with the highlights of the day's disasters and misery. Yes, now we must face it all rather than the small sample we would encounter in our everyday lives, and the disasters we see on television would affect even a heart made of iron.

Nowadays, in order to give people an outlet, to enable them to unburden themselves of some of their pain, a new branch of medicine, psychiatry, has been founded, and those doctors are paid high salaries just for listening to the details of people's mental and emotional chaos. And despite the expense involved in consulting such doctors, their offices are now found on every corner, as green-grocers used to be: that is a sign that mental illness is on the increase. The hearts of those psychiatrists must be so expansive to be able to listen to such tales of woe and to try and help their patients, but mostly they too find themselves overwhelmed, and come to me to unload their heavy burdens. My heart sometimes feels as if it too will sink, as I become affected by the misery of people. Sometimes, I may help put someone on the right track by pointing out the causes of his misery, and I am seeking my Lord's support and His forgiveness...

The Heavenly Homeland



he homeland of the soul is the heavenly realm, just as the homeland of our human personalities is wherever we were born and raised. People have tried to describe the goal of the Sufi Path in so many ways, but the best description is to say that it is the way by which the soul may return to its homeland. Our souls long for that heavenly homeland, just as we may dream of returning to the scenes of fond childhood memories. That attachment to our childhood homes is a reflection of the soul's longing for its original homeland; therefore, its existence is a sign of faith, and the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, in a tradition, is to have said: "Love of one's homeland is of faith".

Therefore, you may come to spend Ramadan here in London, and you may feel by the end of your time here a longing for your homelands. The same holds true for pilgrims to Mecca and Medina: Allah plants in people's hearts a love that enables them to bear all of the hardships of the journey and the pilgrimage, so that people may do their duty to their Lord: then He changes that longing for the Holy Places to a longing to return quickly home.

It is normal that a person should long for his homeland. We have a saying: "You may put the nightingale in a golden cage but it won't be happy, and will lament: "Oh that I were back in the nest I made from sticks and straw". One may see this in the community of our Cypriot immigrants here in London, or with other groups, that have come seeking "streets lined with gold". You may hear them moaning: "Oh our village, our mountains, our rivers, our seas, our old friends!".

That longing is only the longing of the personality and the physical body for a place it associates with good memories; but the longing of the soul goes much deeper. And just as it may sadden a person who returns to the home of his youth, and finds not there the people he loved, so, for the soul Heaven is empty without the Countenance of the Lord. Foreign dignitaries don't go to Buckingham Palace unless the queen is there - for what should they go, otherwise, for sightseeing?

And yourselves: you would not come to London to this humble place unless the person you love is here. Would you come from Canada to London for at least the fifth time to take a sightseeing tour? London is empty for you if that person is not here. But now London is full for you, and even if that person were to be sitting in a cave, London would be full for you because you have found that person. The longing of the soul is for its Lord: what is the Divine Realm without Him?

God is our Guarantor



e pray to our Lord to lift the heaviness off our hearts: and no one can lift those burdens except He Alone. Nowadays, huge industries have been built up whose only function is to provide diversion and amusement for people. Indeed, most industry falls under this category: the product that sells is not simply the one that fulfills a need, but the one that diverts people from the awareness of their misery - thus, television, videos, sports cars, fashions, games etc. etc. are the new necessities of life.

All of these products of diversion have to compete with each other to gain their portion of the market, thus, another huge industry: Advertising. So, as we drive through the streets, beautiful people with clean white smiles come to meet us from their billboards and testify that, if only we buy such - and - such a product, we will look as good as they do, and always be surrounded by other beautiful people. The same is true of television ads: all are happy and laughing people.

But he to whom Allah Almighty has granted penetrating vision may observe that these people are smiling the "smile of the skeleton", the smile

which always appears on skulls: all is just show, inside of themselves they are empty. This is a strange glimpse of reality that has been shown to me many times: what people call pleasure is only a kind of forced enjoyment.

Very young people may perhaps really feel enjoyment, as everything new is tasteful, but as they continue on this way, more and more they feel boredom setting in, that pleasure becoming but a routine. As a result they go further and further on the same way, to see if they can outrace the shadow of routine that makes all pleasures tasteless. Though they cannot win this race, they keep on running, progressing towards extremes of stimulation, but still feeling no pleasure. This disappointment and the consequent misery result from the mistaken assumption that "more is better". For example, a spoonful of honey is sweeter than a cupful which will only make you sick. But because the philosophy of endless greed is now the common creed, people think that finding a beehive would be their greatest good fortune. How wrong they are!

Oh people who claim to possess understanding, you must understand that your Lord has placed a hindrance before the fulfilment of some of your desires only for your own good, not because He enjoys depriving you of something good. If something is prohibited by religion it is only because that so-called pleasure is a trap to catch you into

suffering. But nowadays no one accepts this reality, or even if one does accept, or is attracted to any religion, seeks to ignore moral codes, because he has been taught that exercising absolute freedom is the only way to fulfilment. This is the doctrine that is burning people's faith, and it is in conflict with all world religions, East and West; but onward they march, with grimaces that are supposed to be smiles. They pretend to taste, but taste nothing, because you can't enjoy eating unless you are hungry, can't enjoy drinking unless you are thirsty. Their way is the way of the total destruction of their physical bodies and their spiritual lives.

Later in the day I saw something else that deeply affected my heart. As I looked outside I saw some sparrows hopping about on the roof. We also have sparrows in Cyprus, and I wondered what the living conditions were like for sparrows here in London. So I asked the sparrow: "Are you in any difficulties living here in London? If so, I may ask the sparrows in Cyprus to send you some aid." It replied: "Thank you, but we are all satisfied and we are not in need of any assistance at all. It doesn't matter to us that we are living in such an expensive country - even in Moscow our kind are alright. We are happy and free, never caught up in any crisis. Our salaries are sufficient and always paid on time, and it is all the same to us whether we live in Hampstead or Brixton, East End or

Buckingham Palace: we receive our sustenance and glorify our Lord, saying, 'Allah, Allah'. If you can be more like us you may be happy - no suffering, no hospitals, no prisons, no passports - we are travelling freely from country to country, and we require no expensive insurance policies, our Lord is our guarantor. Oh Son of Adam, you must be more like us, then you will be happy, and have no need to fight and quarrel." Then he flew away.

Look, those sparrows are pleased with their Lord, and Allah is pleased with those who are pleased with Him. Therefore, you must seek ways to make Allah pleased with you. We walk this earth with a heavy burden of ego, and, of course, it is impossible for us to be so light, to flutter and twitter without a care in the world like sparrows, but we can emulate their ways in the trust of God. He Almighty is the Only One who can guarantee your future: you cannot determine what will happen to you, and you cannot know what accidents or misfortunes may befall you, your spouse, your children, nation or business. Don't put your trust in your job, your power, your knowledge or your beauty, for it may be that none of this will avail you when you are most vulnerable. This is an undeniable fact, and somewhere within themselves people know this. Therefore, those skeleton - smiles, when dropped, revert to the frowns that reflect how the people are really feeling.

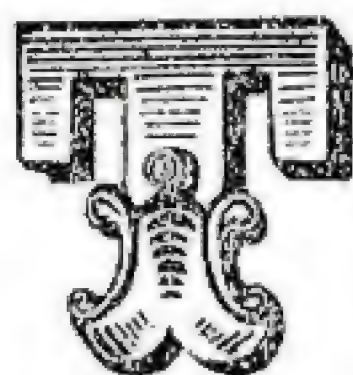
But the Prophets and the Friends of God have received a guarantee from their Lord, a guarantee of protection and care: and according to the level of your faith you too may attain a guarantee of protection and care, and the serenity that results from such assurance.

The shadow of worry pursues the "uninsured", and just as an aspirin may temporarily alleviate the symptoms of a migraine headache, but not cure its causes, so do temporary pleasures make people temporarily oblivious of their miseries. The guarantee of our Lord gives us permanent pleasure, and its source is in our hearts. Whoever has such a fountain in his heart need not be a consumer in the amusement market. Why should he need to escape from his house every night to the discotheque, theater or gambling casino when his heart provides him with all he needs to be happy?

We must aspire to take the keys to our inner treasures, lest all we achieve in our lives is to make ourselves "stimulation addicts"; and ultimately, we must carry responsibility for wasting our lives in such a manner. Those enjoyments are only pain-killers, and you may live for a while on a diet of pain-killers if you wish, but ultimately those pain-killers will kill you.



Seek your Sustenance



he Holy Prophet advised his Nation to work for a living, though our stay in this world be only temporary. He advises us to seek out our sustenance, not to wait for it to find us. It is best for us to work for our livelihood, to engage ourselves in any type of work that does not transgress the Law, as the most tasteful of food is that earned with one's own hands. For man to seek his sustenance within the bounds of the Divine Law is most pleasing to our Lord, and is also conducive to good mental and physical health. So whoever is able-bodied must work. Don't argue that, since the sustenance of every creature is already destined for him you need neither pursue it nor avoid it — these are the excuses of lazy people - and Allah does not favour laziness. As long as you are in this world there must be some work that you can do with your hands.

King Solomon, who was both a Prophet and a Divinely Ordained Monarch was granted by his Lord opulence far beyond the imagination of even the richest man of our time, for Allah Almighty granted him knowledge of the exact location of

all the treasures in the Earth, and also empowered him over armies of Jinn who not only guarded those treasures but would bring up any of them upon command. Solomon was also granted the power to discourse with the animals, and they too were his servants.

Even such a magnificent emperor as Solomon never in his life ate food except the proceeds from the sale of baskets he himself wove. Can we find such scrupulousness anywhere? King Solomon set an example for all of his subjects, and people of all time by not using the wealth of the Nation for his personal needs. But nowadays, on the contrary, the government is expected to supply everyone's needs, so that many people, other than those who are truly handicapped or in need, unashamedly take government handouts and demand that they be increased. Don't be unemployed! Perhaps you can cheat the government, but you can't deceive Allah; and He Almighty punishes such people in this life by making that money a cause of discontent for them. No "barakah" comes from unearned money, and the result of such a life will be both physical and mental illness. Therefore, if you value your health and your sanity, eat from the work of your hands!

Sultan Abdul Hamid, the last Khalifa of the Ottoman Empire was a great personality of his time. By virtue of his great stamina and charisma he was able to not only hold together the crumbling

empire, but to actually effect a kind of revival of spirit throughout the vast realm. He was the last ruler to be mentioned in sermons all across the Muslim World, and he was the last keeper of the holy relics of the Prophet which are in Istanbul.

In the midst of all the affairs of his empire that needed his attending to, he found time to engage in a craft and eat from the proceeds of that work. Not only this, but he never ascended his throne to attend to court until he had recited his Naqshbandi exercises and read a portion of the Qur'an and also of the prayer book "Dalail-ul-Kkairat", as well as praying the two sets of supererogatory prayers of the early morning. It is enough of a testimony to his strength to mention that he sat on the throne for thirty - three years in a time when most kings could not manage to retain their power for even ten years because of the many intrigues and the growing chaos of the times. The magnitude of his majesty was such that Kaiser Wilhelm II once said: "I have met many monarchs and rulers in my life and have found them all to be my inferiors, or at best my equals, but when I entered the presence of Abdul Hamid I began to tremble."

The Holy Prophet once said: "You must work for your honest provision as if you are going to remain in this world forever, and for the afterlife as if you will die tomorrow". Now why would the Prophet, whose mission it was to call to eternal

life suggest that we work as if we will always be in this world? Because when hope for the life of the world is abandoned man will die. Hope for the future of this world and for our position in it is necessary for our being able to devote ourselves to our duties in this life. Besides this, the Holy Prophet declared that man's good deeds live on after him in this world, through the benefit that future generations derive from them.

And with regard to the afterlife, the Holy Prophet was reminding us that we will cross that barrier, and it could be tomorrow, or even today: So, should we not be prepared? In order to put the matter in perspective, the Holy Prophet also said: "Oh people, you must consider how long you may remain in this world and work for it in accordance with the length of your stay; and you must consider as well how long you will be in the life of the hereafter and strive for it accordingly". This saying may seem to contradict the previous one, for if you balance the time you will spend in this world against the time you will be in the hereafter, it will be nothing. Each of our Prophet's sayings is perfect; therefore, for those who would abandon their worldly duties, he has urged them to oppose this tendency by thinking of this world as eternal, so that they may give value to their duties. And for those who would pursue this world exclusively, the second measure: the time spent here against the time there, so that they may seek what is in

fact eternal. Sayyidina Ali related from the wisdom he gained from the Prophet, that exaggeration on the one hand, and the total abandonment, on the other, of any aspect of life is a sign of ignorance. Therefore, in this matter of balance between different aspects of effort we have been urged to seek equilibrium. And our Naqshbandi predecessors recommend the following division of our day: eight hours for prayer and devotions and eight hours for seeking our sustenance, (and time devoted to our families may be considered as devotion, as Allah has ordered us to attend to them). Following such guidelines, even people with heavy responsibilities may find time for both work and prayer, like King Solomon and Sultan Abdul Hamid.

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**Question:** "What shall I do in my work situation where I am surrounded by people who are really devils, and are always trying to drag me down to their level. Shall I be very short with them, reject their familiarity and just go about my business?"

**The Sheikh answered:**

There is no wisdom in pointing out people's faults to them directly, nor in behaving in such a way that your disapproval becomes very obvious. All you may do is to make some very generalized statements at an appropriate time without coming too close to directly attacking their actions or ideas, for there is nothing that the ego hates more than being blamed or accused.



All souls have wings, but the wings of sinners are broken, and they cannot fly until their wings heal, and that takes time. Meanwhile, they do not seek nests in high places - on roofs, mountains or trees - but crawl into the basement. Because they are imprisoned by their egos they remain in that dark surrounding, never seeing the light of day, only knowing artificial light.

They may in time emerge from that dark basement, but if you make them angry with you they will become even more stubborn. Allah Almighty warned the Holy Prophet of the consequences of such an attitude when He said:

**“And if you were short-tempered, severe and hard-hearted they would flee from you”.**

This verse indicates that only through exemplary tolerance and kindness can any impression be made on ill-mannered and badly educated people.

It is not Allah Almighty's way to punish people, not even tyrants, until a Divine Messenger has been sent to them, to offer them a better way than the way of tyranny on which they tread. The door to repentance and just dealing is open to everyone, and it was the duty of the Prophets and their Inheritors to beckon all towards that door; all the more so the tyrants, as their bad actions may adversely affect millions of people or the whole world!

The very word “Pharaoh” has become synony-



mous with "tyrant". Our Lord teaches us the proper way of trying to turn a tyrant away from his tyranny, when He ordered Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them, to:

**"Go unto Pharaoh and speak to him smoothly and politely, that perhaps he may be guided".**

Only later, when Pharaoh's intransigence became apparent, Moses was ordered to threaten him with divine wrath and to bring down divine retribution upon Pharaoh's people.

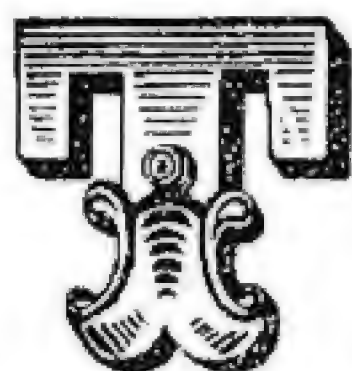
According to this Divine Wisdom, it is wrong for a believer to confront anyone with bad manners and derision. We have not been ordered to be quarrelsome and scowling, cursing-and-swearing people.

Whenever our Grandsheikh would receive government officials, secret police or people who had come to his assembly to try and find fault, in order to oppose him, he, of course, could easily read their secret intentions. He always treated such people with especial kindness, showing them extraordinary respect and deference. The result was that they would feel ashamed of their previous insincere intentions and go away with a good feeling about Grandsheikh, resolving to treat him respectfully from then on. Our Grandsheikh's wife used to warn us: "If you see Grandsheikh making a great fuss over a visitor, beware of that person!"



## *Can you tell a Diamond from a Piece of Glass ?*

*"Speak in accordance with people's understanding."*



That is the advice of the Prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him, to everyone in the world who is trying to communicate with another person.

In trying to make someone understand what you are saying you must perceive on what level this is possible and meet him there. There is no benefit in trying to teach first-graders calculus nor in teaching university students addition and subtraction.

During the Holy Prophet's Night Journey and his Ascension through the seven heavens to the Divine Presence, Allah Almighty bestowed upon him Divine Knowledge, and He taught the Prophet that there are three distinct categories into which this knowledge is divided. The first category of knowledge taught to him was to be shared commonly with all mankind. None of this knowledge is going to shock or disturb people: it is clear and straightforward, can be easily understood by even the simple mind, and it is expressed in a way people's minds can easily grasp. For example, when



I tell you a tale I try to make sure that its contents corresponds to your own experiences so that you may benefit from it.

It is one of the miracles of the Holy Qur'an that everyone who reads it may understand something from what he has read: it is not so cryptic or unclear that people should say: "I can't understand". But don't imagine that the meaning of the Holy Qur'an is only what you have understood and no more! Even scholars must be careful not to make such an assumption, for the more we improve in our faith the sharper our minds become. The light of faith brightens our understanding.

If we can understand that our understanding increases with our faith, then we will never raise objections if we find anything in the Holy Qur'an that seems to conflict with what we see to be our better judgement. We must not draw hasty conclusions, but wait until enough of the Holy Qur'an's limitless meanings are revealed to our minds to understand the wisdom in what we read, for the Qur'an contains Meaning Oceans and we must undergo training to be able to extract pearls from them. And before we assume that we know better than the Qur'an, or even that we know better than any person, we must pay heed to our Lord's declaration: "Above every knower there is one who knows more", and understand that our perception may be clouded, and that surely there exist people who are more knowledgeable and wise than we



are. If common people and scholars alike heed this Quranic observation and understand that others may see and know what they don't and can't, then they will keep an open mind, and, at least, not attack those whose knowledge is of a different realm.

The second category of knowledge the Holy Prophet was instructed to reveal to initiates, to seekers of truth, in accordance with their thirst for deeper understanding. This knowledge was only for those who had become suitable recipients for extraordinary revelation that would only shock or confuse the uninitiated.

One Great Grandsheikh, Sheikh Muhyuddin Ibn-al-Arabi, may Allah bless him, received huge grants of knowledge of this category from the Holy Prophet. He was one of the first to put into writing knowledge that had previously been passed on only orally and spiritually. As a result of this he was widely persecuted. Scholars used to be scandalized by his writings and say: "From where is he bringing these things? We have looked through the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet but find nothing in them to support such heretical views." This they were saying in the spirit of those who, in his time, rejected the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

From where did that understanding come to Sheikh Muhyuddin? The Holy Prophet once said: "Beware of the perception of the true believer,



for he sees with the light of Allah". It was the light of strong faith, and the resulting clarity of perception and sharpness of intellect that enabled Sheikh Muhyuddin to delve into that "restricted area". So, if you consider yourself to be a seeker of truth, don't be lazy or timid in your quest, but seek to benefit from the clues provided by those who received initiation into this second category of knowledge. Don't be surprised that Sheikh Muhyuddin, Mevlana Rumi, Abu-Yazid al-Bistami, Shah Naqshband or Grandsheikh Daghistani reveal knowledge that is beyond the pale of the outward or apparent understanding of Islam. But don't try to force such an understanding on those who are not seeking it, for it is not intended for all. Even the companions of the Prophet, who loved him intensely and were always ready to sacrifice everything for him were not all able to receive knowledge of this type, and among those who were, some could receive more than others. Sayyidina Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was one of those who received the most in-depth knowledge; he once said to some of the other companions: "There are two categories of knowledge I received from the Holy Prophet: one I reveal to you, and the other, were I to even intimate something of it, you would try to kill me."

Whoever encounters a jewel but knows not the distinguishing characteristic of gems may think it to be part of a fossilized coke-bottle and



throw it away. There is a famous diamond in Istanbul, perhaps one of the biggest and most valuable diamonds in the world. The story of this diamond may help illustrate my point. That diamond was originally found in a dust-bin by a street sweeper. He put it in his pocket and brought it to a spoon-maker he knew. The spoon-maker saw that it could be valuable, so he offered the street-sweeper a wooden spoon in exchange for the diamond. The street-sweeper was very happy with the trade, as, in those days it was a sign of distinction to carry a spoon in one's belt - just as a cowboy carries a gun in his holster - and to always be prepared in case rice or soup was served.

Then the spoon-maker took the diamond to a jeweller, who paid him a lot of money for it. The jeweller polished it and notified the Vizier about the existence of an extraordinary diamond. The Vizier bought it for a fortune and presented it to the Sultan, who had never seen its like. But to the street-sweeper its worth was equivalent only to one wooden spoon.

So, everyone receives what he needs on his level, and this was a Divine Order to the Prophet: "Give to those who may receive", and it is written on the Preserved Tablet who will be eligible for that knowledge.

The third category of knowledge is that which is between Allah and His Prophet to the exclusion of all others. This is the realm of the private



confidence bestowed upon the Prophet by his Lord, and it is a depth of knowledge that distinguished him from and sets him above all of the Saints and learned people of his Nation.

Once we have understood this division of Islamic knowledge into three categories, and especially if we are faithful enough to develop penetrating vision and a share of esoteric knowledge, it should not be difficult for us to address people in accordance with their understanding. In his time the Holy Prophet was working mostly with a very coarse and unlearned class of people, and he addressed them, accordingly, in a manner suited to their mentality. He built their understanding, so to speak, from the bottom up, laying a strong base upon which to build; but for those of them whose hearts were receptive, their simple origins were no obstacle to their receiving grants of inner knowledge.

In his time, the Holy Prophet also addressed more learned people: delegations of Christian clergy from Yemen and Jewish Rabbis and scholars residing in Medina. He addressed them on their respective levels too, discussing his mission in accordance with the contents of their Holy Books. But knowledge of religious scripture is neither a condition for, nor a disqualification from inner knowledge - the only condition is a receptive heart and mind, and the only disqualification is pride and envy. So those who came with sincerity and



open hearts received amply, but those who came with prejudice could not be helped.

Our time also has its particular conditions and peoples. Certain words or methods may be acceptable to you but difficult for others. When the Holy Prophet applied this wisdom to his manner of approaching people, Islam spread both East and West quickly. Therefore, don't be oblivious to the reactions of these whom you address, don't run up against a wall, gaining nothing in the process - except a bump on the head. Find common ground, then build on it step by step.

Islam derives its vitality from its inherent simplicity and universal principles. The basics may be practiced by all, irrespective of distinctions based on race, nationality, sex, age or cultural adherence, and it is in harmony with nature - with the nature of Man and with that of the Earth. But we must be worthy of understanding this and communicating it.

In our time elderly people may often be hard on youth for the way they behave, saying: "We never behaved so badly even when we were young". But they must remember what kinds of conditions and social norms those children are now being brought up in. Similarly, practising Muslims who are scrupulously observing the Law of Islam, may be impatient with those who are slowly approaching Islam or whose hearts are drawn to a circle of believers, expecting those people to conform.

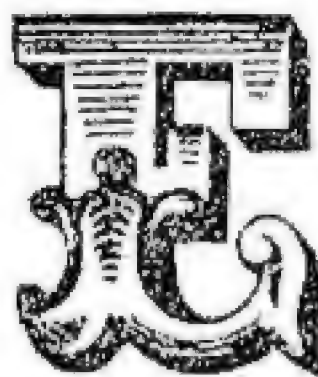


quickly. If this is the case, it is a sign that you have not yet understood anything, and that your practices are only blinders. If you are wise, you will expect or demand only very little in the way of conformity from newcomers. Don't try to load your burden on them - and if you are trying to shift your burden you must consider its causes. Don't worry about bringing people "in line" but rather concern yourself with making sure that your own practices are becoming a means for attaining inner peace and are not becoming an end in themselves. If your practice brings you inner peace and wisdom others will emulate those practices voluntarily.

The proper attitude is indicated in a saying of the Holy Prophet: "Make things easy for people, not difficult; give them good tidings and don't drive them away". Now, most Muslims are only driving Westerners farther away from Islam by ignoring the differences in the conditions they face. Such an attitude is a sign that they have deprived themselves of access to that second category of knowledge - wisdom - which brings with itself profound and penetrating vision; indeed, the blind are not even able to understand the first category of knowledge correctly. We ask our Lord to grant us understanding of the Way of Islam, and to help us know which direction we must go.



## *How the Ant with the Broken Leg got to Mecca*

very person from among mankind may attain Divine Stations. The Way is not barred to anyone: we are all candidates for the position of "Deputy of God on Earth". The Holy Verse is clear enough: "Oh man, verily you are striving towards your Lord, and you will meet Him"; therefore, whoever makes a serious attempt to reach, must reach. But if we consistently take one step forward and two steps back, and make ourselves fit Allah Almighty's description: "They believed, then fell into disbelief, believed again, and once more fell", then we will find ourselves lost.

Steadfastness is the quality that will aid our progress, even if that progress be slow. Be steadfast and you may reach your goal; and even if you don't, your Lord perceives your sincere intention and may convey you towards your goal, just when you have despaired. Our Grandsheikh said that such perseverance in the face of immense odds is most difficult. Imagine that a person has been told: "There is a treasure waiting for you inside the Earth, a fourth of the way to China - you must



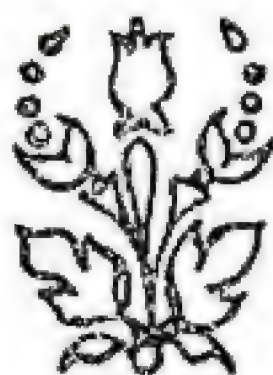
dig and take it. Here is a broken pick and a spade with a broken handle, now you may start digging". Imagine being ordered to such a task with such tools! You must start; don't say: "It is impossible! Even an oil drill can't reach down that far!" No, you must say: "My Lord has ordered me to proceed and He has given me these instruments with which to proceed with my task, so I must start digging". Then you dig, and when you collapse from exhaustion your Lord may deliver that treasure up to you in the blink of an eye.

Perhaps an ant with a broken leg may intend to travel from London to Mecca in order to perform the rites of pilgrimage. He may intend such a journey and start on his way, but do you think that there is any hope of him arriving? Allah Almighty sends a pilgrim who sets down his handbag; as the ant crawls in to see if there is any food to be found for the way, the pilgrim comes, picks up the bag and gets into the taxi to the airport. When the pilgrim arrives at Jeddah, he boards a bus to Mecca, then a taxi to his hotel. At the hotel he leaves his other bags, but takes this valuable one with him to the Holy Mosque to make his Tawaf of the Kaaba... After his Tawaf he sits down to read Qur'an, and the terrified ant slowly emerges, only to find himself in front of the Kaaba.

Allah Almighty made a way for that ant because it firmly intended to reach that unattainable station, with its broken leg and all and he helped



it arrive quickly, too. So don't lose hope! We are like that ant: we are directing our faces towards the Divine Presence and asking to attain to it. He may take us to that state, but we can never make it on our own.



**Question:** Is keeping our way in the non-supportive surroundings of the West also like this?

**The Sheikh said:**

These surroundings are like a whetting stone that serves to make our faith sharper and stronger. Our Grandsheikh used to say to me: "Oh Nazim Efendi, if you can go to the downtown area of Damascus and return to this mountain without indulging your eyes, without casting your glance here and there, that is a greater feat and of more value than staying forty years in seclusion in a cave."

Yes, a man may go to Mecca and Medina for six months, fasting Ramadaan there in the scorching heat and suffering thirst he never imagined when he fasted at home; he may stay through the Hajj season and experience overcrowded conditions



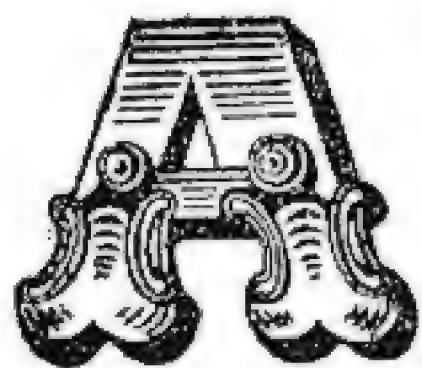
unparalleled on the face of the Earth. He may perform so many ritual prayers and rites with sincerity and may feel his faith renewed, but just as he is leaving the holy cities and their constraining atmosphere, and boards the plane at Jeddah, a seductive stewardess greets him, saying: "Welcome aboard..." Then his ego catches him and wrestles him to the ground.

Therefore, here in the West where conditions are difficult, you are offered the challenge of controlling your ego under conditions exactly contrary to those ends, but the reward is greater and of more lasting benefit. Here you may lose it all or you may reach your goal quickly. Yes, it is difficult to lead a chaste life under such circumstances, but you must not make excuses for yourself! You may live in surroundings that ensure that you are never for one moment allowed to forget sexuality, and you may feel that you will never be able to resist such an onslaught, but you must only intend sincerely to keep yourself and He will help you attain that goal - just remember the ant with the broken leg!





## *The Lion is a Harmless Dussycat, until...*



Allah Almighty sent every kind of trial to the Holy Prophet and his companions - why? He Almighty willed that Islam become a great world religion, an international way of life, so He made sure to impart the perfect education to the Prophet and his companions, as they were to be the foundation upon which that great building - comprising all nations and races - was to rest. All training is based on trials, to ascertain whether each lesson has been well learned. One trial which Allah sent upon this first group of believers in Islam was hunger, since hunger is a powerful motive for our egos to rebel. People are very quick to anger when they are hungry; therefore, we have a saying: "The lion is a harmless pussycat - until it gets hungry!" When the lion is hungry, it will attack, and the same is true of our egos. Whoever is able to control himself when hungry is proven to be trustworthy: whoever loses his self-control at the first pang cannot be trusted.

The Prophet and his companions were tested in this way and found to be strong, and it was a training that helped them endure every hardship and keep their self-control. Whenever the companions were hungry for three days the Prophet



was hungry for four; when they were hungry for two days he was hungry for three. Once, when the Prophet had not eaten in three days, he went to Abu Bakr's house only to find that he had been hungry for two. Then both of them went to the house of Umar and found him in the same condition, but content and not complaining. How is it with us? If the meal arrives five minutes late we are disgruntled. With what right? Look, if a young lady says to her impassioned suitor: "If you remain two days without food I will come to you", he will say: "For your sake three days!" This is a simple example: if a young person may bear hunger for three days for the sake of the love of a creature, then why should we not be able to endure for our Creator, nay, even give our lives to Him, as He may make us content. With Him the thirsty knows no more thirst, the hungry knows no more hunger, the dead are no longer dead. That is the power of the love of God that has been transmitted to our heart.

Our brother here has opened his house to all of us: that is also a trial for him. It is impossible for the people of our times to have sixty or seventy guests in their homes. For our brother and his family this may be a spacious house, but such a throng must certainly be an imposition, and his welcoming us must be a sign of his strong faith. And if his house could accomodate one-thousand people, his faith would cause him to open it to



all of them, whether he knew them or not, as he only sees that they are all his Lord's servants. It makes no difference to him whether they are members of the Bundestag or peasants, Germans or Africans, because, through his faith, he has attained to the knowledge that the Lord is the Lord of the worlds, of all the Children of Adam, and that, as the Lord states in the Holy Qur'an:

**"We have honoured all the Children of Adam".**

He Almighty has respected us without distinction, and it is an attribute He calls on us to emulate.

Faith has settled in our brother's heart, so that he may take every burden upon his shoulders. Allah supports him and will provide, for whoever gives freely is never going to become poorer as a result of it. We are in need of such faith, for without faith our hearts become narrow and we can tolerate less and less the burdens we are asked to carry. But when we believe, our hearts expand and we can bear much joyfully.

And nowadays, when faith has been entirely lost, people cannot even bear the burdens of their own existence and commit suicide. The real cause of depression is only loss of faith. When faith is lost darkness descends on our hearts. We are in need of people who can bring the light of faith to people's hearts more than we are in need of psychiatrists to deaden people's feelings with their psycho-pharmaca. I am only a weak servant, and I am asking our Lord's help to bring us and the people of our time out of darkness.



## *The Source of Wisdom is the Heart, not any Book*



wise man may utter words of wisdom, but once they are recorded they join the body of knowledge that is generally available to listeners and readers far and wide. Once words of wisdom have been transferred to the realm of knowledge through such mediums as books and tapes, they lose something essential. Of course one may derive so much benefit from them still, but they can't replace the draught of wisdom from the gushing source - that source is the heart, and what comes from the heart of a wise man passes through his words directly into the heart of the seeker.

Where may one find wisdom? Not necessarily in the same place one would find a wealth of knowledge. A source of wisdom may be a Sheikh, a scholar or a professor, but may also be a plumber, a peasant or a totally illiterate person. Treasures are mostly sought in ruins, not in modern skyscrapers; buried under layers of debris, not sitting in the open, lying on the counter. And when the searcher finds some broken pottery or bits and pieces of a treasure that serves to enlighten him



as to the realities of what he is excavating, he does not concern himself with the fact that these relics are not intact, for how could he expect to find that? And if you offer him brand new items from a supermarket that correspond in use to those ancient ones he found, he will not even consider your offer, and think you to be just joking, saying: "How do these two compare?"

Therefore, take wisdom wherever you may find it, and don't ask for titles or diplomas. Remember that your Lord may grant you wisdom through any means, so don't turn your nose up at anyone, but take a look at what he is offering, and if it be from ruins or in a ruinous state you must be ready to salvage it.

Wisdom belongs to the realm of the heart: once it has been grasped it is never lost. One of our Grandsheikhs, Abu-Yazid al-Bistami, once addressed seekers of knowledge as follows: "Oh scholars, you are carrying your knowledge like a horse carries a load of books, you are loaded down and ever tiring, and you know that the Holy Prophet said, 'Forgetfulness is the destroyer of knowledge'. As a termite comes and devours a piece of wood, so does time and age consume all you know. As long as you are in the hands of your egos your memory will decline with age, but the heart of hearts, once it has been awakened, strengthens with age. The heart is a source of wisdom that never dries up; but beware if you have not sought and received



divine powers, for in the end your cup, which now runneth over will be as dry as a bone."

My Grandsheikh, may Allah bless him, was over one-hundred years old but his memory was remarkable. This wakefulness of mind was a result only of his spiritual condition, otherwise it it would have been impossible.

As I meet more and more Westerners I find that they are very avid readers of books. I have never seen people who read so much! Centuries ago Muslims used to read, but now all that remains is that some people read the Holy Qur'an, but when that practice is lost they usually stop reading altogether. But in the West, your hobby is reading, and perhaps, if you are seeking wisdom through books, you have asked yourself: "Perhaps I have read one-thousand books, and I hope to read another thousand yet, but for what? To what end am I reading and reading and reading?" Then it may occur to you that you are seeking something else through your reading, something that reading draws you close to, but cannot get you to.

And when, as a result of this soul-searching you begin to read from books of Sufi knowledge, of the Prophet, of Abu Bakr and Ali, of Rumi, of Attar, you only feel your longing more strongly and feel that you are even thirstier. Through all this reading you have tasted only a trickle, just enough to know how sweet a spring this is. By now you must realize that books are not the best



vessels for wisdom of the heart, for the heart itself is the vessel, and the precious draught is passed from heart to heart. Where may such heart-springs be found in a time that has turned verdant fields into desert wastes? Wandering through huge desert wastes, how many of us may just happen to stumble upon an oasis? First you may stumble upon one-hundred mirages! But you must keep on, don't turn back saying, "I have found only illusions". No, no one said that you have embarked on an easy journey, so you must be perseverant.

Because of the immense challenge involved in this quest for inner wisdom, for finding the bubbling spring in the desert wastes, so many people choose to totally ignore this most important facet of human life, and either devote themselves to the pursuits of worldly gain, or, if "religiously inclined", to the accumulation of religious knowledge. Imam al-Ghazzali, a world-famous figure in the history of Islam, was simultaneously a great scholar and a sufi master. He wrote so many books that, to read all of them in a lifetime is challenge enough. It is said about his master work, "Ihya-Ulum-ud-Din", "The Revival of Religious Sciences", that if all other books written by Islamic scholars throughout history were lost, this book alone would be enough to preserve all the essential knowledge of the centuries of Islam, and enough to keep Islam strong and vital. As his heart was opened to Divine Wisdom, he was able to expand our understanding



of The Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions through his writings.

According to Imam al-Ghazzali, when a person dies, he is as a sleeper who has awakened. When he thus passes from the world of images to the world of reality, he faces immediately an evaluation of his time in this life. Even before he is buried in his grave the Lord will put forty questions to him. The first and most important of these questions is, "Oh My servant, during your life you were so careful to care for your appearance, to ornament yourself for the sake of your fellow creatures: wearing fine clothes, and arranging your hair. But did you bother to arrange your heart for your meeting with Me? You knew that I am not concerned with your physical beauty, the colour of your hair or skin, or whether you are short or tall. You knew that I wanted from you only to purify your heart and to come to My presence prepared, with your heart turned towards Me and not back to that place which you have left, and which you knew you must eventually leave?"

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty declares: "A man cannot have two hearts in the hollow of his breast", therefore, the goal of all sufi endeavour is to rid the heart of extraneous pre-occupations, and turn towards Allah fully. This is the purification of the heart, and when this is accomplished, the light of Allah's eternal beauty will shine on and from the mirror of your heart. This is why, for



those who have attained the inner reality to live up to such a practice, the meaning of fasting is not only what it implies for the normal believer, i.e. abstinence from food, drink, indulgence and anger for a certain period of time, but the total absorption in the Divine Presence. Therefore, whenever a worldly whim seems to invade the heart of such people they consider themselves ritually impure and immediately take a shower. That is the level of saints, it is a practice impossible to be undertaken by others - we would always be wet. Yes, the Lord is calling us saying: "Oh my servant, why are you trying to escape from Me? If I were to leave you for even one moment you would cease to exist."



و من الله  
التوفيق







# The Golden Chain of Spiritual Transmission of the Naqshbandi - Khwajagan Masters

1. The Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa, Peace be upon him.
2. Abu Bakr as-Siddiq
3. Salman al-Farsi
4. Al-Imam Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr as-Siddiq
5. Al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq
6. Abu Yazid al-Bistami
7. Abul Hasan al-Kharqani
8. Abu Ali al-Farmadi
9. Yusuf al-Hamdani
10. Abul-Abbas (Khidr, upon whom be peace)
11. Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujduwani
12. Arif Righwari
13. Mahmud al-Faghnawi
14. Ali Ramitani
15. Muhammad Baba Sammasi
16. Seyyid Amir Kullal
17. Qutub at-Tariqah Shah Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshband al-Uwaysi al-Bukhari
18. Alauddin Muhammad al-Attar



19. Ya'qub al-Charkhy
20. Ubeydullah al-Ahrar as-Samarqandi
21. Muhammad az-Zahid
22. Dervish Muhammad al-Bukhari
23. Hajegi Emkeneki as-Samarqandi
24. Muhammad al-Baqibillah as-Samarqandi
25. Mujaddid al-Alf ath-Thani Imam Rabbani  
Ahmad Faruq as-Sirhindi
26. Urwat ul-Wuthqa Muhammad Ma'sum  
ar-Rabbani
27. Haji Sayfuddin ar-Rabbani
28. Nur Muhammad al-Badwani
29. Habibullah Mirza Jan-i-Janan al-Mazhar
30. Ghulam Ali Abdullah ad-Dehlawi
31. Ziyauddin Abu Naasan Muhammad Khalid  
al-Baghdadi ash-Shami
32. Sheikh Ismail an-Narani
33. Khas Muhammad Shirwani
34. Sheikh Muhammad Yaraghi
35. Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Ghumuqi al-Husseini
36. Abu Ahmed as-Sughuri
37. Abu Muhammad al-Madani
38. Sayyid Sharafuddin ad-Daghistani
39. Sultan al-Awliya Abdullah ad-Daghistani
40. Sheikhuna wa-Ustazuna Sheikh Muhammad  
Nazim Adil al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani



